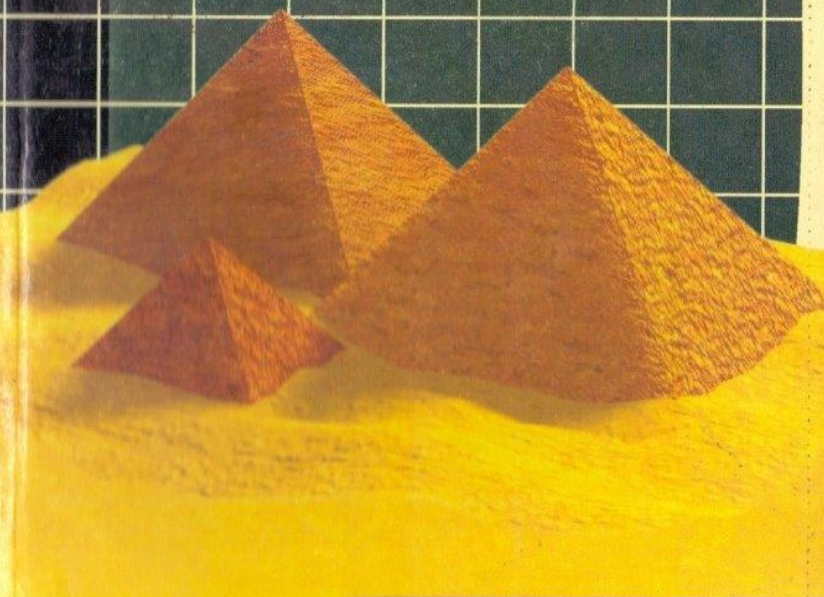


PARANORMAL ACHIEVEMENTS

THROUGH SELF DISCIPLINE



—Shriram Sharma Acharya

PARA-NORMAL ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH SELF-DISCIPLINE

(Sadhana-se-siddhi)

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PARA-NORMAL ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH SELF-DISCIPLINE

THE ESSENCE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE IS IMBIBITION OF MORALITY IN CHARACTER

'*Sadhana*' or self-discipline means an endeavour to exercise a voluntary control over personal traits. The deities being invoked are in fact symbolical representations of one's own inherent divine attributes and ethical self. When these characteristics are in a dormant state, man suffers from unhappiness and deprivations. But as soon as they are recognized, accentuated and activated, the individual begins to sense his extra-ordinary potential of control over sensory and extra-sensory elements (*Ridhi-Siddhi*) of the world. A human being is basically omnipotent (a living *Kalpavriksha*). God has bestowed him with many capabilities-with everything required by him. The human existence is in fact a repository of innumerable potentialities. Their number is infinite like the deposits of precious stones and minerals buried deep in the earth and lying in the abyssal depths of the ocean. However, not unlike the wealth of these deposits, the supra-normal talents of man are not within the reach of all and sundry. A persistent endeavour is required to unearth them. Those who are unable to gather sufficient enterprise do not gain anything. On the other hand, who make an effort, are rewarded in each and every field of life. This very endeavour is known as '*sadhana*' or self-discipline. Evidently, invocation of a deity has only one objective, i.e. to activate one's inherent potentialities, make oneself adequately competent and imbibe a high level of morality in character. As a matter of fact, the inherent divine attributes of man himself have been

metaphysically referred to as the influential deities who have been personified with a particular form, means of conveyance, weaponry, ornamentation etc. according to their specific characteristics.

The rituals of *Sadhana-Upasana* (spiritual-religious practices) are nothing but cues shrouded in mystery for activation of dormant human potentialities. They show us the way for energising these latent talents. The authenticity of a spiritual pursuit (*Sadhana*) lies in its objectives. In a true spiritual practice, an entreaty to God serves as a medium for preparing a comprehensive plan for self-evolution and for preparing a suitable environment.

As mentioned earlier, human existence is a repository of innumerable potentialities. Being the supreme creation of God, it has inherited many divine attributes from the Creator. Nevertheless, He has made arrangements for necessary safeguards against misutilisation of these latent powers. They become accessible to only those who acquire the wisdom of their rightful use. Since time immemorial, nature has been bestowing its gifts in a measure commensurate with the deservedness of the receiver. The famous men and women through-out the course of history have climbed successive peaks of success only after earning suitable qualifications. The golden rule of para-normal achievements through self-discipline is indisputable. Through the medium of deities we endeavour to infuse self-discipline in our own self. To acquire the gift of progressiveness, man has always found it necessary to control his irrelevant desires emanating from juvenile behavioral patterns and incoherent concepts by harnessing them in culture and civility. The name, fame and success of an individual has always

grown in proportion to the degree of imbibition of this age old dictum in personal life.

A human entity is comparable to a garden bedecked with many inherent and visible physical characteristics. An endeavour to discipline, systematise and develop these talents is fully rewarded in contentment and achievements of the highest order. On the other hand, when mental attributes and physical capabilities are allowed to wander aimlessly on their own, they begin to expand in an ugly, haphazard wild growth of unkempt thorny bushes of a forest rendering the entire field of operation difficult and inaccessible.

Like the wish-tree *Kalpavricha* (a tree in heaven) a human being has been equipped by the Almighty to achieve success in innumerable fields, provided he makes an earnest attempt to harness his mode of living by taking recourse to correct means. The efforts made to achieve this objective are collectively known as *Sadhana*. A number of deities are being invoked with the aspiration of fulfillment of one wish or the other by their grace. In fact, the truth behind this concept is only this: prayers are only means to develop one's inherent faith and conviction which in turn control our behavioural patterns besides providing a meaningful direction to the thought processes. Moreover, a person engaged in spiritual practices meticulously follows the principles of morality in life. These endeavours collectively help the individual in discarding his evil traits of character and imbibing virtues in thoughts and actions. Cultural evolution of an individual is an obvious gift of God. With it, any one can hope to achieve the desired objectives.

Sahdana i.e. an endeavour for voluntary imbibition of discipline is carried out both within the inner self as well as for the physical exterior. In either of fields efforts are rewarded with success. Whichever course is chosen and perseveringly followed with meticulous diligence, takes the aspirant forward to successive stages of success.

The farmer is well aware of the significance of *Sadhana*. While tending to the crops he remains thoroughly involved in his field, toiling and sweating day after day throughout the year. In the process, he is the least concerned about the inclemency of the weather, his personal comforts and health. He caresses each and every plant and without depending on any external guidance, at his own pace takes advance decisions from application of fertilizers, irrigation, tilling, weeding, harrowing, to production of the crop before harvesting. His own volition and inspiration produce autonomic reactions in him to the needs of the crop, requirements of the ancilliary equipments and animals tending to them and related implements of farming. These are automatically and effortlessly translated into actions. In the entire process, the industrious farmer remains oblivious to exhaustion, boredom and haste to achieve results. He does not insist on immediate results for his labour. Since he is aware that the crop take its own time to mature and he has to wait patiently till then, he remains free from the anxiety of filling his godowns with the produce. He also finds it unnecessary to anticipate any fixed quantity of grains out of his fields, since it is dependent on so many factors. In this manner he is continuously involved in his *sadhana* of farming. From time to time he does come across problems but these are surmounted by him with

his own expertise and resources. The crop is never neglected. He is unable to rest without making arrangements to fulfill the needs of the crop. Later, when crop matures and the grains ripen, he takes the produce home with gratitude to the Creator. Since he had not been expecting any fixed quantity of grains, he does not feel dissatisfied with the final outcome. Whatever is achieved is considered the will and gift of God. This is the *sadhana* of a farmer, which he continues to perform from his adolescence to death with unwaivering faith. In this *sadhana* he neither takes risks nor feels tired. Nor does he feel bored or indifferent. In this way a farmer presents an ideal example for aspirants to *sadhana*.

The field of *sadhana* is one's own inner-self. Buried herein is a treasure-house of immense riches. Where is then need for seeking and begging in the world without and in the process losing self-respect by exhibiting one's deprivations? The specific capabilities of the inner-self themselves have in fact, been identified by the distinguished wisemen as the deities (*Devi-Devata*) and they devised specific spiritual procedure for acquisition of the wealth buried in inner-self through the medium of external rituals. For gaining physical strength, one makes use of various appliances of a gymnasium. These implements do not have any strength of their own but help the gymnast in building his muscles. These are thus, only implemental in helping a person to bring out his own strength. The same is true about *Atm-sadhana* (self-disciplining).

A student of *'Atma-sadhana* can learn a lot by keenly observing the mental state and physical activities of a wrestler doing his regular practice each day with

successively renewed enthusiasm. He does not feel satisfied merely with his exercise but also makes arrangements for nutritious food, observes continence to conserve his energy, rubs his body with oil to maintain flexibility of muscles and learns to maintain a poise. Neglecting these parameters that are related, he can not hope for success exclusively from his exercises. Likewise, though rules and rituals for spiritual practices (*Upasana*) are significant, they do not serve the purpose in totality. The aspirant has to remodel his mental processes and physical activities to suit the objectives.

Take the field of music. Singers and instrumentalists do not become accomplished in a day. They have to make a persistent endeavour to tune in with the octaves. In absence of this practice, the musical notes of the vocalists become erratic and fingers of the instrumentalists lose coordination. Musical concerts are held on rare occasions, but to make oneself worthy of participation in these conferences, the musician has to keep constantly in practice which is nothing but *sadhana*. An accomplished artist remains indifferent to the reactions of the audience nor does he bother about the remunerations. He feels contented with the pleasure derived from his daily practice itself. A true artist would not find any difference even when he does not get reward or recognition for his art. He would nonchalantly continue to do his music-*sadhana* even while dwelling in a mud hut in the forest without losing interest. Mental make up of a person practising self-discipline should have at least this much in common.

Let us now consider other examples of dancers and cinema and stage artists, sculptors and workers of fine

arts. All of them understand the importance of daily practice to keep in form. The soldier has to keep himself active by participation in routine parade and regular exercises, in absence of which neither he can depend on his marksmanship nor on war strategy. A pledge (*sankalp*) for a fixed number of *japs* in a fixed time (*anusthan*) may serve the purpose of fulfilling some particular objectives, but a true aspirant of self-discipline never remains contented with this limited ritual. He knows that for quenching his thirst, he has to draw water from well everyday and for cleanliness the room is to be swept each day. For spiritual health, similar routine is required. To mine the gems of his hidden talents, the aspirant must dig in the innerself each day. Otherwise the possibility of gaining ever new achievements remains remote. The cleanliness of innerself is as important as cleaning of exterior of the body for which taking bath, cleaning teeth and changing clothes has to be done daily. Likewise, the pollutants of the turbulent extra-sensory environment of the world are also to be removed daily. Otherwise they keep on accumulating and sooner or later give rise to unsurmountable problems.

In order to keep the body functional, it is required to fulfill two basic necessities. One, an intake of daily food and two, regular defecation. Obviously, none of them can be neglected. In absence of food, blood will not be replenished and body would gradually decay and die. On the other hand, in absence of defecation toxins produced in the body will keep on accumulating and will ultimately explode into many incurable diseases culminating into death. Very much like the material necessity of the physical body, the extra-sensory component (*Divya Chetna*) of human existence has its own requirements.

The latter too needs sustenance. It also loses its potency by collection of undesirable elements and, therefore, requires regular purification. The process of *sadhana* fulfills either of the above requirements. With the help of *sadhana*, the dormant good instincts are activated, accentuated and provided the right channel for useful application. With it the hunger of the extra-sensory existence is satisfied as a consequence of which life becomes ever happy and prosperous. *Sadhana* is instrumental in extradition of those vices, evil traits and animal instincts which create hindrance at every step of success in life. The two-fold process of self-purification and self-evolution involved in *sadhana* uproots the animal instincts and the instincts accumulated by the evil deeds of past and present life (*Kusanskar*) and in their place sows the seeds of prosperity, progress and happiness. Thus, the aspirant is doubly rewarded by getting rid of the thorny traits of vices and at the same time obtaining sweet fruits of success. Amongst all the miraculous deities known the world over, God within is the most powerful. His invocation, worship, adoration is soon rewarded. It never becomes infructuous. A combination of clarity of objective and appropriate endeavour in association with disciplining in life (*Jeevan Sadhana*) bestows rewards like *amrita* (ambrosia), *paras* (touch stone) *kalpavriksha* and *Kamadhenu*.

After disciplining even animals of low order are seen to perform unusual feats. A wild cow in the jungle does not tolerate the proximity of a human being and destroys the crops. But once tamed, it becomes an asset to the farmer providing milk, offsprings and many other benefits. In this way not only the cow is benefited by comfort and protection, the same is also reciprocated to the

keeper. It also holds true about the other wild animals. Horses, dogs, pigs and elephants of the jungle have to remain hungry frequently, undergo many hardships and face many uncertainties in life. After taming, they live comfortably and also bestow benefits to their masters. Human body and its inner sentient field is a storehouse of many powerful energy currents. Generally, like the animals of the forest, these are futile and because of lack of control, directionless. Consequently, like a rotten substance they make the entire surroundings toxic. Just as a fire can not exist without burning the material around it and spilled bottle of acid results in destroying the objects in contact, uncontrolled animal instincts invariably create chaos and disorder. On the other hand, just as a controlled fire and acid are useful to man, controlled instincts create miracles for a man. The accruing benefits are so large and so many that an ordinary looking person is seen to create an extraordinary environment. *Sadhana* is a name given to the voluntary endeavour of imbibing a cultural orderliness in thoughts and actions in life. Those who understand this principle and succeed in implementing it, reap the fruits like those who earn immense profits without any investment by taming and selling wild animals.

The trained animals of a circus perform miraculous feats impressing the onlookers. The tamed animals are praised, earn superiority of status over others of their breed and are well looked after. The tamers and trainers too are paid well. Above all, the owner of circus earns large profits from these animals, who otherwise, because of their wild habits, wandered restlessly in the forest creating troubles for others.

Even the domestic animals can not be fully utilized without proper disciplining and training. After attaining puberty, a calf (or a colt) can not drive a plough or a cart on its own. It is not easy to ride any horse and make it trot. Other animals like camels and bullocks too do not have an inherent capacity to drive any vehicle. They earn the capability of proper execution of their responsibility through a prolonged and difficult process of training by cajoling and reprimand. This is known as *Sadhana*. A quartet of internal sensory nerve centres of the human existence, viz. *mun* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect) *chitta* (counter part of 'mind' in deeper levels of consciousness) and *ahankar* (counter part of *buddhi* in deeper levels of consciousness) is comparable to a group of four wild animals. In the natural state, these four constituents of consciousness play truant. By virtue of evil deeds of lives in earlier births, these are covered with thick coatings of evil animal instincts. The device to remove these coatings may be termed as *sadhana*. Refining the animal instincts and then developing them into those becoming of a human being is an expertise comparable to that of an sculpture who transforms an irregular raw stone into an artistic statue. Development of this expertise is called self-disciplining (*atm - sadhana*). Although this endeavour is as difficult as training of wild animals or sculpturing a raw piece of rock, it is pregnant with innumerable potentialities.

The enchantment created by puppeteers, magicians and miraculous feats performed by trained animals are nothing else than consequences of persistent, perseverant and faithful endeavours of the performers totally involved in their effort. Such miracles are seen in every field of life whether it is an ordinary entertainment show

or some extraordinary achievement by the individuals who excelled in their field of expertise. *Sadhana* is the process through which one's own God gifted inherent talents are accentuated and utilised for some meaningful objective. *Sadhana* invariably results in para-normal achievements. This is an established law of nature and is eternally true. One who is prepared to follow this course of self-disciplining, makes an effort for evolution in character, is assured of unending series of successes in his own life, which he otherwise desperately seeks hither and thither.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PARA - NORMAL ACHIEVEMENTS BY SADHANA

Like any raw material, a human being too is basically raw in behaviour. In order to be presentable and useful, he has to be modelled and provided with useful attributes. In the raw state, mud is trampled upon by all the sundry, but once shaped into a piece of pottery, toy or statue its inherent characteristics become manifest and it is appropriately utilised. In his raw state, the status of a human being is not better than any humanoid animal. At times, he is found stooped down to such a low level that he is considered more despicable and pitiable than an animal. Such an individual is always exposed to sufferings. On the other hand he continues to be a source of unhappiness to the associated persons. Throughout his life he remains a burden on family and society who feel relieved on his death. On the other hand, when a person develops his inherent talents well and imbibes a high degree of morality in character, he emerges as the supreme creation of God.

In a way *sadhana* and *sanskriti* (culture) are synonymous. The process comprising upgradation of physical activity, improvements in the levels of discriminatory thinking and inherent empathy combined with conversion of animal instincts into divine traits, is the art and science of *sadhana*. With the help of *sadhana* anyone can gain control over sensory and extra-sensory elements of the world, thereby having an easy access to para-normal achievements (thus he becomes a self-realized, *siddha purusha*).

The iron ore mined from the earth contains only rock material in its raw state. For extracting pure iron,

this ore is required to be purified in a smelter. The raw ore is of no use. It can neither be utilised as rock nor as iron, whereas after smelting the purified iron can be moulded into a variety of implements, components of machines and parts of weaponry. This is how the utility and importance of the raw ore bodies are enhanced. The chemists and druggists manufacture many medicines like *Lohasava*, *Lohabhasma*, *Mandurbhasma*, and other iron tonics in which this ordinary iron is an essential constituent which ameliorates the sufferings of many chronic patients. The credit for transforming the ordinary, insignificant earth material of iron ore into useful steel can only be given to the heat treatment of the smelting process. In order to convert a rugged piece of land into a fertile plain, the farmer has to perform quite a few activities. An expert gardener is able to convert a wild haphazard growth of forest into a beautiful garden with his artistry of horticulture. Health enthusiasts engaged in the *sadhana* of the body (body-building) succeed in making it beautiful, muscular, strong and attractive. The body then converts an ordinary man into a wrestler and earns for him name, fame and wealth. To be recognised as a learned person, *sadhana* of mind is required. Influence of education and environment help an individual to become civil and cultured which bring him credit. All this takes place as a consequence of *sanskara - sadhana* (ethical evolution).

A lump of gold changes into a beautiful attractive ornament in the hands of a goldsmith. However, prior to this stage, it has to pass through many processes of heating, hammering and scraping. It also holds true for other metals. Their value is increased manifold after conversion to an article of utility. A piece of rock has

little value, but after going through prolonged process of hammering and chiselling, it becomes an idol of deity. Scribbling on a piece of a paper by a literateur changes it into an invaluable manuscript.

In order to channelise the strength of the otherwise useless and dangerous wild animals for utilitarian needs, man has persevered for long and developed the science of animal husbandry. The wild cats of jungle which may otherwise maul and kill the human being with their animal instinct also earn large profits for him after being trained. It is the miracle of *sadhana*.

From the point of view of anthropology, man is also a wild animal. To reach the present state of physical and mental maturity man has undergone several stages of development during the evolution of the family of apes. In course of successive evolution, he has developed his intellectual and working capabilities. He has made numerous achievements in the fields of education, medicine, sculpture, fine arts, farming, transportation etc. But all of this has not happened just suddenly and casually. It is the result of thousands of years of *sadhana* for development. Had he not erected the framework of social structure, governmental systems, philosophy, religion, culture and ethics, in his original form, he would not have been better than apes. Even today, in areas untouched by modern civilization man is living in a state of pitiable backwardness.

The composition of bones and flesh of the bodies of all human beings is more or less identical. Although in nature even a leaf differs from the other yet broadly speaking, the various types of flora are classed together.

The same holds true about the human beings in general, irrespective of their insignificant differences in body structure. It is found that in spite of being born and brought up in identical environment men differ greatly from each other.

Broadly, the human community is divisible in two categories. One is the class of people for ever entangled in activities of earning livelihood, procreation and immature childish activities of worldly acquisitions; various kinds of attachments with persons, property and habits and arrogant display of egos. This category of people may earn distinction of being affluent, educated, holding high offices or renowned artists; but this much is not sufficient to make them distinctive amongst the mankind. To earn distinction as a superhuman in the human community, one has to have a high character. These are the people who refuse to follow the crowd and its dogmas and on the contrary take a pledge to be the navigator for the millions caught in the tempest of adversity and unhappiness. The wise belong to this class. They are resolute persons who are capable of taking firm decisions and have the perseverance to translate them into actions. They possess sufficient inner strength to fight against their own weaknesses, forcefully dispel evil instincts and replace them with virtues and ideals of the highest order.

This is, however, not everybody's domain. Individuals with a low bent of mind find it very difficult to extricate themselves from the narrow worldly entanglements of the self. They are forever following the crowd and its dogmas. They lack the courage to charter their own independent course of action in the wide arena of count-

less opportunities. Consequently, they continue to be an insignificant non-entity in the large mass of humanity i.e. amongst the millions of humanoid animals for ever engaged in activities of food, sex and worldly acquisitions. The majority consists of such persons. Like the oceans which are full of insignificant organisms but also have deposits of pearls, this world abounds in non-descript men amongst which one does come across some rare distinguished individuals of above class.

These are the gems of humanity. Whenever a human being is evaluated, he is weighed on the scales of piety and talents. Piety is reflected in largeheartedness and foresighted wisdom. The basic talents of human beings are self-discipline, control over desires, a voluntary acceptance of physical hardships and belief in ideals. Those who succeeded in this acid test have earned distinction in the society. Their names are carved in human history in golden letters. On the other hand, those for whom their own physical existence was supreme and who had chosen to rot in the swamp of worldly desires and attachments, have at the most found recognition amongst people of their own kind. The latter have always been regarded by the wise as immature, irrespective of their worldly attainments.

Since time immemorial, these very special individuals have been considered fortunate, since only they have been earning divine gifts of self-contentment and social recognition. Even while living on this earth they continue to enjoy heavenly pleasures. Disentangling themselves from all shackles of undesirable attachments of the world, they come in close contact with the Infinite i.e. God, where they find the real meaning of human life,

significance of which has always been highlighted in the legends and biographies of 'super men', sages, saints, angels and messengers of God. This is the one and the only norm for being considered fortunate and wise and the only way to true progress. Pitiable are those, who in their shortsightedness and ignorance consider regression and passivity itself as progress. No event in this world occurs accidentally or unexpectedly. Whatever transpires ranging from miraculous events of nature to the rise and fall of human civilizations, is a definite consequence of sequential reactions in the programs of the system created by the Almighty. In his ignorance of this process, man has been relating events with fate, destiny, 'will of God' and similar causative factors. Supra-normal achievements of some individuals have always been related to *sadhana*. Ample evidences are available to prove this hypothesis. With persistent *sadhana* of science man could get miraculous boons from nature. In the absence of *sadhana*, none of the present scientific achievements could have been possible. On shelves of shopping complexes, all varieties of merchandise suitable for each level of buyers are on display. It is all for sale. The shopkeeper patiently waits for the customer to come and buy it. On the other hand, there are many who would like to purchase the glittering goods. The window-shoppers pass-by casting a longing glance, stopping for a moment to have a closer look, moving away reluctantly because of inadequate financial capacity to buy the goods. This is a piquant situation. The salesman is eager to sell and the customer is equally eager to buy. Then why there is no coordination? The paradox is simple to explain. The customer does not possess commensurate resources to purchase the goods. Let us take another example. There are thousands of girls in the society to be married. On the other hand, so many

remain bachelors throughout their lives. Why do they not find life-partners amongst each other? This is because there is lack of compatibility. The same holds true in all fields of life. For the synchronicity of compatible factors needed for any successful operation, worthiness has to be established.

There is no end to human desires. Man wants good health and a long life. He yearns for circumstances conducive to cheerfulness and enthusiasm. Who would not like to be free of financial hardships? Who would not yearn for love of a spouse? Respectful reciprocation of behaviour and warm hearted co-operation from friends is expected by all of us. Each human heart is full of such desires but very rarely some see to their fulfillment. It is not that co-operation does not come forth from the expected quarters, but the net result is not always what had been expected. Let us consider the first requirement of life, i.e. good health. The creator has equipped the exterior and interior of human body with a constitution capable of keeping everyone on this earth robust, with a long life. Why should a human being suffer with infirmity and sickness resulting in an untimely death, when even worms, reptiles, animals and the birds are able to live a life free of diseases in their natural habitat. The lower form of beings are found ever active. Birds keep on chirping and hopping here and there. The nightingale continues to sing, frogs croak and bees hum while buzzing past. Why should then humans suffer while creating anxiety for self and others, weeping and making others weep and spend life with moments of tensions and uneasiness? What is the propriety of utilizing the enormous capacity of human mind in creating tides of tensions and despair when it is capable of generating and spreading fragrance

of happiness all around? It is suprising that in nature, amongst the living beings, man alone feels impoverished and suffers from anxieties of want, when his small body frame of a few feet which is better equipped with ten dexterous fingers, needs barely a few handful of food-grains and a few meters of cloth? When even the lowly birds and animals of the biological kingdom like pigeons and deers have learned to live amicably and compatibly in large flocks, why families and small groups of men have created mini-asylums for themselves, characterised by abnormal behaviour and ill-will? Why on one hand, man continues to blow trumpets and beat drums to exhibit his faith in God and on the other continues to discard the divine traditions of benevolent large heartedness and mutual sharing of misery and happiness in his inter-relationship with fellow beings?

World is full of comforts and luxury. Most of us aspire to acquire as many of these conveniences as is possible within our means. However, at times this yearning is found to exceed decent limits and a tendency develops for acquisition by force. Why does it transpire? Why should the nearest and dearest prince of the creator behave so irresponsibly and live in such pitiable conditions full of misery in utter helplessness and disgrace?

This apparent paradox has very simple explanation. For each and every thing of this world, a price is to be paid. Man receives his body, life-force, earth, sky, sun, air and clouds as free gifts of the nature, much before he is born. For later acquisitions, it is mandatory to do perseverant hard work associated with total physical and mental involvement. In addition to this, for greater achievements, another important attribute is needed. It is

the magnetism of a mature personality. Essentially, this is the force that attracts the desired successes. Besides, there is not an iota of doubt in the belief that each drop of sweat is comparable in value to a diamond or a pearl and if associated with total dedication, it is found to produce miracles after miracles. Co-ordination of these two attributes provide a person with merit or worthiness. Hard work, dedication and persistent endeavours to imbibe a high level of morality are the virtues to be regarded as invaluable wealth locked in a safe of character, which can always be encashed for success and excellence at all levels and in every field of life. There is no other alternative. How on earth, without any efforts, can an undeserving expect a change in his fate towards greater prosperity? Is it possible for the rain water to accumulate on a mound or for vegetation to grow on a barren rock? Even a downpour during the peak of monsoon would not be able to do it. For a blind person who does not have the capacity (merit) to see, this beautiful world continues to be eternally dark. An individual who has damaged his eardrums, is forever deprived of the sound of music. This is because he does not possess the capacity to hear. This world, which is one of the most beautiful and co-ordinated system created by God would appear in disorder to a mentally deranged person. He does not have a capacity to think properly. The wise understands that since it is impossible to remove all the thorns from the path, one has to protect himself by wearing shoes. To see the world in the colour of your choice, there is no other way but to choose spectacles of desired colour. World is like a mirror. Whatever happens in it is in fact one's own reflection. Had it not been true, between two neighbours living in the same environment, one would not have been blessed with success and the

other cursed with failure. The world is like an echo from a well. Here one's own actions keep on reflecting back as reactions.

One who believes in the efficacy of *sadhana* in life, must first imbibe unqualifying faith. This is the basic element constituting the roots of *sadhana*. Cultivation of total faith indicates a good beginning. As a matter of fact, the deity believed to be present in places of worship in the world-without, makes its appearance within the inner self. The 'causes' of any environments or circumstances are thus only visible consequences of certain invisible internal thought processes. Toxins in the internal circulatory system of the human body make their presence felt as abscess appearing on the skin. The leaves, flowers and fruits of a tree do not materialise from space. They owe their existence to the nutrients drawn by the invisible roots. Similarly, the source of extraordinary talents in human beings lies deep within the self. One may express his humility and gratitude to some deity, *mantra* or talisman for the gift of these virtues but the fact remains, that not a single instance can be cited where an undeserving person was favoured by some deity and bestowed with more favours than what he or she actually deserved.

There is a common belief that the deities reward the deserving with para-normal capabilities and *sadhana* is an entreaty for the same. This concept, however, does not reflect the truth in totality. For examining and purchasing an article of merchandise, a request has to be made to the shopkeeper. Otherwise, he would remain indifferent to the presence of the customer. Prayer may be regarded as an expression of one's desire for some favour expect-

ed from the Divinity. In this sense, it is justifiable as well as necessary. However, the aspirant is misguided when he begins to regard praying as begging; since while begging, the beggar expects something without paying the price for it. Or else he repeatedly entreats to transact something valuable in exchange for very little. Consequently, the acquiring benefits are also insignificant. Neither these are satisfactory nor respectable. Utilization of charity is always associated with a feeling a guilt. Besides, it is associated with the disrespect shown by the alien who gives it. On the other hand, the tradition of asking something for self and accepting it from others is only typical of human community. In all transactions carried out in the system established by God in the universe, a price is to be paid for each acquisition. The entire creation of God is established on the basic principle that only the deserving are to be rewarded. There is no shortage of oxygen in the air, but only the competent (healthy) lungs receive the required quantity. The receiver does not make any specific request for it. Whatever he deserves is given to him automatically. That is to say, in order to acquire and retain extraordinary or para-normal capabilities from God, it is necessary to raise oneself to the appropriate level of worthiness. It is absolutely essential to acquire the degree of merit capable of absorbing the gift. This is in fact the process to be followed during *sadhana*. The degree of maturity and intensity of effort is commensurately rewarded with emanation of talents from within and with an exuberant manifestation without.

The deities are kind as well as condescending but they are very well aware of the adverse consequences of rewarding a person without testing his merits. Hence, only those are benefited by their grace who are able to

establish their merit by making appropriate efforts. At times, persistent begging and cajoling by the insincere persons brings them some marginal benefits; but these are too insignificant and exceptions to the rule. The non-deserving do not prosper even from unearned large wealth or property obtained from extraneous sources like inheritance. For such persons, wealth is seen wasted by indulgence in vices producing unfavorable circumstances for the beneficiary. Acquisition of desired resources and various achievements are, however, only insignificant part of the total gains of human enterprise (*purushartha sadhana*). The true benefits are total evolution of his inherent virtues, working capabilities and upliftment of character. These are the basic ingredients for refinement of talents, with the help of which such success can be assured in all fields of life.

The law of acquisition of para-normal capabilities (*siddhi*) by control of invisible forces of nature through *sadhana* is well established. Each and every component of this universe has been incessantly receiving the grace of the Creator since time immemorial, and will continue to benefit from it till the Doom's day. However, the degree to which one gets benefited by His benevolence, depends exclusively on one's own level of merit. Take for an example the various type of food materials found in abundance in this world. They are within the reach of all living beings. Nevertheless, an ant receives the type and quantity of food commensurate with its capability to digest, whereas an elephant acquires its food suitable to its own capacity. Here, the grace and gifts of the Creator do not discriminate between big and small creatures. Nor does he expect any specific request. All that is required is demonstration of one's merit or worthiness. The only

objective of prayer and *sadhana* is upgradation of the aforesaid merit or capability.

The forests are capable of interacting with the clouds and the rainfall. Droplets of dew remain undisturbed only on small plants. Deposits of minerals are confined to particular mineral provinces. This is the type of magnetism, which attracts components and attributes of complementary nature, collecting them at places depending on the intensity of attraction present. The magnetism of blooming flowers attracts honey bees, butterflies and humming bees. Ripening youth automatically becomes centre of attraction. Talent invites many admirers and followers. These are the miracles of various types of magnetism. The magnetism of *sadhak*, (person engaged in *sadhana*) sends an extra-sensory invitation to the divine powers and easily persuades them for bestowing one benefit after another. In the physical world one comes across many instances of progress. That is why these are considered as normal, worldly and are referred to as achievements. People, in general, are, however, less interested in progress of the inner-self. In this direction hardly any steps are taken. Even those who attempt to follow the path of self-progress, do so haphazardly, without resorting to systematic procedures. Consequently, para-normal achievements, if any, are seen only rarely and as attributes of very few individuals. Whatever unusual happenings come to notice, are looked upon with curiosity and are considered as miracles. The benefits of *sadhana* of the inner-self are regarded as miracles and given the name '*siddhi*' (para-normal control over things and events). As a matter of fact, *sadhana* of the inner-self culminates into uncovering of the deep seated shells of super consciousness (*chetna*) with consequent awak-

ening of dormant powers. These powers are helpful in extra-ordinary para-normal achievements. (*siddhi*).

There are two sources from which the currents of *siddhi* flow. It comes both from within the inner-self and also as the grace of God from without. His (or Her) grace bestows innumerable benefits on aspirants. In the same manner, the process of self-evolution activates the dormant capabilities of a person, as a consequence of which those para-normal attributes come to light which are not within the reach of people in general and about which they hardly know anything. The inner-self of human entity has immense capabilities. In a way they are comparable to those of the Creator. The future of a large tree remains assuredly preserved in its small seed. Structure of a small atom with its revolving electrons and protons is comparable to that of solar system. Roots draw nutrients from the earth to keep the tree green flowering and fructifying. Although roots are not visible and are buried in the ground, yet everyone knows that tree is only the frame, the source of beauty and potentiality of which is totally confined within the invisible roots. The small existence of soul is as much potent as omnipresence of God. A human being in fact, grows within. Whatever he appears externally reflects and testifies the progress within.

The dormant power of beings are activated and strengthened from within the inner-self. Once activated they gush outwards like mountain rivers emerging from the interior of the glaciers. Divine powers of the Creator descend on the *śādhak* like events from the space. It is like the cascades which fall down from above and gain momentum on reaching the plains. Either of the above

blessings from within and without are within easy reach of all and sundry. After establishing merit, or worthiness, one can acquire anything from the markets of the world in desired quantity. In the stock market, the role of money is supreme. The affluent ones have a freedom to buy articles of comfort and convenience of any quality and that too in whatever quantity they require. The various fields of capabilities like physical strength, intellect, and talents are also not different. There too one can acquire anything of his choice and in any amount commensurate with the merit earned and efforts made. Those with an empty purse who can not muster strength or are inactive have only to face disappointment and despair while attempting a higher goal than what they are capable of. Their fate is sealed beforehand. Pleading and praying bring them 'nothing'. Merit or capability is the only wealth which has to be earned to deserve acquisition of various types of distinctions. *Sadhana* is the human industry to acquire this multifaceted capability.

The law of acquisition of para-normal achievements through *sadhana* is well established and time-tested. In various fields of human activity, industrious persons engaged in *sadhana* are found achieving the desired objectives. Self-evolution is also a specific process for acquiring special attributes of super-consciousness (*chetna*). The principles for success in this field are same as those for the achievements in the material world. The *sadhaks* practice *sadhana* of life (*jeevandevta*). They endeavour to upgrade both internal and external facets of life to an equally higher level, from their normal raw state. A change of outlook towards idealistic thinking makes them beautiful and systematised. Replacement of wild growth of vegetation with a garden, taming of wild

animals and changing a raw material (or being) into a balanced utilitarian object (or being) is called culture. The miracle of progress seen all over the world is the result of this very process. Creativity has been the basis of comforts and resources. The objective of *sadhana* is to make oneself a repository (*Kalpavrikcha*) of virtues.

Human life itself is an apparent deity. Those who attempt *sadhana* of life are assured of superhuman achievements in material world (*siddhis*) and para-normal capability with control over the elements of nature and events (*riddhis*). On the other hand the misguided, who keep on prostrating, flattering and entreating their imaginary deities are ultimately found disgusted, expressing their disillusionment in despair. The wise are advised to choose reality, however, harsh or unpleasant it may appear. That, which is easily obtainable, generally brings in disappointment and nothing else. Pessimism and atheism are one and the same thing. Those who aspire for greater achievements without much effort may initially appear to be believers, but are finally found changed into as atheist. This is because the laws of nature are not subject to change to suit the whims of some impatient greedy persons. Had it been possible to make great achievements with the help of 'short cuts' of religious rituals without developing talents and paying the price by hard work, none in this world would have dared to follow the difficult path of character development and imbibition of high ideals. Therefore, it should always be remembered that life is the deity. The earlier and more comprehensively this reality is understood, the better it would be for the betterment of life. The sooner one develops faith in this eternal truth and begins to imbibe it in his life, the fortunate he would be considered.

DAILY SADHANA OF SELF-REALIZATION FOR EVOLUTION OF INNER SELF

The two doctrines of self - realization (*Atm Bodh*) and 'elemental knowledge' (*Tatva Bodh*) are like the twin streams, Ganga and Yamuna emerging from the Himalayas, which are considered holiest amongst the holy rivers of India (the two rivers merge at the holy city of Prayag - Allahabad). Self-realization means an understanding of reason behind one's existence - a comprehension of why a human being has been created, the way he exists and what the Creator expects from him. It also means adoption of a mental attitude, planning, programming and action to fulfill His expectations. By '*Tatva Bodh*' we mean acquiring an in-depth knowledge of capabilities of human body, its proper utilization and its final destiny. Apart from this, its objective is eradication of misconceptions in respect of interaction of human beings with material objects of the world and re-orientation of existing concepts thereof. In a nutshell, a total comprehension of *chetana*, (the vital force which controls all the attributes of mind) is self-realization (*atm bodh*). The science of interaction of *Chetana* with living beings and material objects is *Tatva Bodh* (elemental knowledge of the philosophy of human existence). One who has fully understood this concept is deemed to have fulfilled the objective of '*Gyan Sadhana*' (*sadhana* of wisdom).

Although *sadhana* of life is to be performed twenty-four hours a day, a proper initiation, an effective beginning can only be made by a specified process of contemplation. It involves a three-fold action. One - an understanding of form, objective and utilization of life and formulation of activities accordingly. Two-following a

dictum of "each day a new birth and each night a new death"; i.e. preparing and acting on a plan of physical and mental activities to the optimum utilization of life. Three-while retiring to the bed in the night imbibing a feeling of daily death and consequent detachment to the world.

Amongst the above three concepts, the first two are to be contemplated early in the morning at the time of awakening from sleep and the third one in the night at the time of retiring to bed. Each morning, soon after awakening from sleep, one should put up three questions to self and seek one's own answers to them. In order to always keep in mind an understanding of form, objective and utilization of life and thus constantly remembering the right source of action without any deviation, one should practise repeating the following question answer session each day.

Ask yourself the following three questions

Q.1 We know that in bestowal of His grace, God is never selective. Why then human being has been blessed with special capabilities of speech, contemplation, literacy and numerous other avenues of comforts and conveniences? Why has HE taken extra care to make a man superior to other beings?

Ans. There can be only one answer - He was in need of companions or co-workers, to make "His Garden" which is this world, more beautiful and well-orderly. Hence to fulfill this objective, He created man-equipping him with supreme competence and multi-faceted physical and mental capacities. The comforts and conveniences were

provided to implement the divine objective more effectively.

Q.2. What is the harm if one reserves the advantages of the available conveniences, talents and resources exclusively for personal utilization?

Ans. The only logical answer could be this: "In comparison to other living beings, whatever is available to us in excess - as intellectual and financial advantage or any other talent, are sacrosanct gifts of the Creator which have been kept in our trusteeship exclusively for the benefit of mankind. After retaining the minimum of the resources for maintenance of body, the remaining are to be utilized for welfare of the world (of which humanity is the part)."

Q.3. Is this human body which has been given to me by God as an extraordinary and rare gift being properly utilized?

Ans. The answer will be: "Life is meaningless without being cultured, temperate, industrious, benevolent, gentlemanly, good natured and helping. In order to make it a habit of imbibing these virtues increasingly high ideals, civility, hard work and courage should be appropriately incorporated in one's own life.

The foregoing questions and their answers are at the root of the philosophy of spirituality. Realization of the prime importance of these aspects in life and a deep contemplation thereupon, induces one to adopt codes of behaviour based on a distinct utilitarian philosophy in future. Proper understanding of this philosophy changes

the hopes and aspirations of the person. A self-realized person can be easily identified from his words and deeds. Those who can begin to follow the path of self-realization, through the above methodology find perceptible changes appearing in their codes of conduct and working attitudes.

Contemplation on the dictum of 'each day a new birth and each night a new death' serves the dual purpose of *sadhana* of self-realization (*Atm Bodh*) and *sadhana* of elemental realization (*Tatva Bodh*). Immediately after awakening in the morning, make it a practice to contemplate, that this day you have been born for the first time and are going to live just for a day till you go to sleep. The day is, therefore, to be utilized following the most ideal codes of conduct. In order to translate this concept into action, a programme of work for the period from leaving the bed in the morning to retiring for sleep in the night is to be chalked out. The schedule should be tight enough to avoid any possibilities of slackness or lethargy. All details are to be worked out before hand. Without leaving a scope of lethargy, the schedule should appropriately integrate time to be spent in earning livelihood, taking care of personal requirements, providing for family responsibilities with maximum possible devotion to social welfare, *Upasana* (daily religious rituals), *swadhyay* (study of spiritual religious literature) etc. For taking rest the period during the night is considered adequate. A habit of 'early to bed and early to rise' should be cultivated. A habitually careless person is like a deranged person. Such individuals face failures in life and are despised and shunned because of their inactivity.

Soon after leaving the bed in the morning, one

should decide upon a balanced programme of activities for the day. It is also to be kept in mind that an idealistic approach is to be appropriately integrated in the work to be carried out. Such actions, in which evil ambitions, greed, self-interest, deceit and amoral objectives are involved may appear utilitarian but are invariably associated with ingredients which are harmful to the society and degrade the self-esteem of the person. On the other hand, simple tasks, performed with incorporation of principles of social welfare and self-evolution fall in the category of *Karmayog*. Such deeds may not be apparently benevolent but they do serve the same purpose. It should also be remembered that those coming in contact or under the influence of one's deeds should not be able to find any scope for criticism for the ulterior motives or misguidance. Each and every action of an individual should incorporate honesty, truth, duty consciousness and welfare of others.

Whatever is done with this point of view is considered ethical as well as good for the society. Persons with noble thoughts never indulge in any action which is harmful to the society, even if for this, they have to starve. Performance of tasks for social welfare in exchange for appropriate remunerations also comes in the category of *Karmayog*.

Throughout the day, whatever work is done should be performed efficiently keeping an idealistic approach in view, so that the day may be regarded as fruitfully utilized. In course of work, whenever lethargy, carelessness or unethical thoughts begin to interfere because of old habits, immediate corrective measures should be taken. Just as one does not tolerate a fly on the face

even for a moment, extreme care should be taken to ward off incorporation of any undesirable element which involuntarily interferes with one's thoughts and actions. For this, one has to keep a constant watch on one's own self. Evil habits are like experienced thieves. In order to protect oneself from them, one must play the role of an alert watchman. The thief should never be allowed to enter the premises. Even if he dares do it, he should be ejected by force. One has to be always in a state of extreme alertness.

Throughout the day, one must remember that this day has to be utilized for welfare of others and for this all plans and actions must follow ideals of the highest order. For this purpose, there is to be a minimum involvement of self for maintenance of own body and family. When such a resolution is adopted in the morning for the entire day and strictly adhered to, one would feel proud and satisfied for that day of his life.

At the end of the day, when there is time to retire to bed, imagine that curtain is going to fall on a beautiful play. Imagine that, "this world is a theater where I was given a role to play for today which I enacted to the best of my capability. Whatever mistakes were made, will be remembered and will be taken extra care on the next day to avoid any recurrence of the same. Many things were given to me for playing the role. There were also many associate characters. Whatever company and interaction was required,, has been utilized. Now leave is being taken of them after a hard day's work and with detachment I am retiring to relax in the lap of 'mother sleep' - death, whose protegee I am."

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With this concept, we practice *Vairagya* (a total detachment to the consequences of thoughts and deeds in the world). This is an experimental action devoid of involvement in the results (*Anasakti*). "None of the objects available to me belong to me and none of my companions are related to me. All of them belong to the Creator and are products of their own creation (actions). I am neither an owner of anything nor master. For me a proper interaction with each animate and inanimate object guided by a sense of duty is justified" Any sense of belonging and personal affiliations and associated vanity of being a master or owner are meaningless. Each night while going to bed it should be assumed that one chapter of life has satisfactorily ended and the ensuing period of sleep is akin to the eternal peace of death. Thus each period of sleep during the night is likened to "daily death" A practice of this concept gives immense spiritual power and benefits. Generally we remain oblivious of death. Hence the possibility of understanding the value and meaning of life always eludes us. When some thing remains within our reach, we neither fully realize its actual significance nor its appropriate utility. The moment we lose it, we come to understand how much important it was for us and had we known it earlier we could have put it to a better use.

Amongst all the living beings of this world, human life is the most precious gift of God. No other form of living organism has been provided with so many conveniences. Those who have the foresight for appropriate utilization of the valuable gifts of God should be particularly on the lookout for their proper opportunities. The acid test demands utilization of this rare human life for fulfilling commensurate objectives. Even the living

beings of the lowest order are busy in activities of sustenance and procreation. As desired by the Creator sanctity of human dignity lies in utilization of life in the twin objectives of self-benediction (*Atma-Kalyan*) and human welfare. Those who persevere to work for this cause achieve the higher status of enlightened souls (*Mahatma*) and saints (*Devatma*) and eventually become one with the Almighty (*Parmatma*). On the contrary, an entanglement in base human instincts degrades the person to lower forms of life, wherefrom he has to struggle again from one form of being to another, to justify regaining of his erstwhile status of human being. For those who are knowingly ignoring this stark reality, it is sufficient to comment that knowledge, incapable of promoting action is worse than ignorance.

The period of daily sleep in the night should be perceived as the eternal sleep of death. On retiring to bed perceive that according to the dictum "each day a new birth and each night a new death," death has arrived. The one-day-long life is now coming to an end and death in the form of sleep is approaching to pick up life to its lap.

The conception should be as though the vital force of life has come out of the body and is flying high in the bright sky. The dead body is left lying on the bed. Arrangements are being made for its last rites. One's own existence as life is vital force which is independent of the body. The form of the body in spite of its having been under control of soul (vital-force), has a totally separate existence. The concept of independence of soul from the body, though frequently talked about, is seldom felt. There is only a faint momentary realization of transience

of body while accompanying a funeral procession, but soon, like flash of lightning, it is lost in oblivion. Only when a scenario of one's own death is seriously visualized the wisdom of self-realization dawns upon the person, which is the fundamental percept of spirituality. When one goes to sleep considering death as the daily bed-companion and constantly keeps in mind its consequences, the reactions are capable of showing the path of self-evolution. Daily contemplation of death, while going to bed, if carried out deeply, makes one think about many newer aspects of life. With this one concept it becomes more explicit that human life is the supreme gift of God and man has been made its custodian for making the beautiful garden of God (the world) better, more cultured and orderly. The futility of indulgence in decoration and comforts of the body and absurdity of forgetting the importance of self-evolution are clearly understood. Only then begins a strong urge to modify one's mode of living. Human body is only an instrument. It has been given to us by the Creator merely for fulfilling the high ideals according to His wish. If this rare opportunity of human life is lost in trivialities of indulgence in sex, greed and weaknesses of mind like craving for material objects and in satisfying vanity and the real objective of inner self is not fulfilled, it would only be called a catastrophe. The true perspective, however, appears only when there is an awareness of imminent death. Otherwise, one continues to live in a stupor of self-oblivion thinking of nothing else than merry making. For one who loses sight of this objective in life, fulfillment of greeds and worldly entanglements continue to be most favourite pastimes.

Death is the supreme teacher. When accepted as

bed-companion, it teaches the real value of life, its proper utilization and norms of living much better than what any wise man or scientist could do. While going to sleep one should have the feeling of total detachment to the world as well as indifference to the outcome of the needs of the day like a *Karmayogi*. A *Vairagi* or *Sanyasi* is one who detaches himself from the percepts of ownership of the worldly objects and beings coming in contact (i.e. one who prefers to be gardener than owner of the garden). Such a reflection produces a discriminatory farsighted prudence. Compliance of duty becomes the sole desire. The moment one realizes "God is owner - I am only the caretaker," the entire perspective undergoes change. The accruing advantage is two-fold. One-there is an easy relief from futile activities and two - the person becomes free of unnecessary worries and anxieties.

Only those who have sportsman spirit enjoy life. The characters in a play enact various roles but the latter do not leave much impact on their lives. Wisdom lies in doing one's own duty with full honesty and alertness, considering the above policy as the focal point of one's contentment and fulfillment of responsibilities. When desires are delimited to doing only one's duties and the truth of dependence of consequences on circumstances is accepted, the constantly troubling anxieties are dissolved without any effort. One who welcomes failures and successes without any distinction and has achieved equanimity may be called *tatvadarshi* (one who realizes the supreme truth) or a true scientist. Only such an individual is able to enjoy the drama of life and keeps himself as well as his associates in a state of perpetual happiness. Renunciation (*Vairagya* or *Sanyas*) refer only to this state of mind. These are the persons who are

called *Anasakta Karmyogi* or *Sthith Pragya* or *Pragyavan*. When one goes to bed with this frame of mind, he gets a sound sleep, feels relaxed and is able to feel refreshed on awakening.

Indian religion is based on *Varnashram* (four-fold classification of life, with duties assigned according to qualifications for each quarter of average age of man, taken as hundred years). Religious disciplines demand that in the last phase of life before death, man must live as a *sanyasi* (an ascetic). Unfortunately, the old traditions are fast vanishing but when they were prevalent they were strictly adhered to. When due to some reasons, one could not imbibe *sanyas*, till his last moments, there was a provision to provide it symbolically as "*Twara Sanyas*" the process of which took only a short time. Hence the foretold process if adopted in the daily routine while going to bed would be no less than a high level of spiritual *sadhana*. The concept should be this: "those being served throughout the day belonged to the garden of the Creator. One's responsibility was fulfilled by tending to them. Now (at night), the charge is being handed over to the Master while proceeding on leave. Whatever wealth, prosperity and status was given by Him for custody was His. Now leave is being taken empty handed after handing Him over His own property. The body and mind too were on loan from the repository of God. The journey back home is being performed alone after depositing these too at the appropriate place" These are the percepts suggested for the period of retirement to bed. A practice of going to sleep with visualization of this pictorial concept produces a mental state comparable to that of a *sanyasi* or *Vairagi* and is sufficient to produce an alert state of self-awakening for the next twenty-

four hours. This state of mind is to be revived day after day, in the manner suggested above.

Next comes the routine of the morning. The day should begin with a conviction that the opportunity given by the Creator as "life for the day" is to be utilized to the best of advantage. In the period beginning from awakening to the moment of putting one's feet down on the floor after leaving the bed, only this thought should remain in the mind, that the new birth (lease of life for the day) is most welcome. With this in mind, best possible plans should be chalked out for optimum utilization of the day. Within above period a framework for the activities of the day may be worked out with a sincere integration of concepts promoting ideals. This process of contemplation is like morning *Brahm Sandhya* (a spiritual ritual). It can be practised very easily without any problem of constraints of time, procedural details or arrangements of provision of implements of rituals. This is known as the *Yog Sadhana* of *Atm Bodh* (self-realization).

For the evening *sandhya*, the dictum of "each night a new death" is required to be imbibed deeply and faithfully in the conscience. While doing so there will be reactions against old habits as strong as the degree of imbibition. Even without resorting to any change in style of dressing (attire) and disruption of normal worldly activities, this is the easiest way to conform one's thought processes to that of a *sanyasi* or *anasakta yogi*. This *sadhana* of "*Tatvaboth*" also does not leave any scope for excuses of non-availability of time, paucity of resources, lack of interest and the like.

The periods of sun rise and sunset are known as *Sandhya*. According to laws of spiritual science, these are to be utilized exclusively for *Atm sadhana*. Assuming sleep as night and wakefulness as day, the period of *sandhi* (junction) of these two has been termed as *sandhya kal*. Thus the *Atm Bodh Sadhana* in the morning while leaving the bed and *Tatva Bodh Sadhana* in the night while going to bed, may be regarded as *sadhanas* of high order capable of influencing every day-living. These *sadhanas* are unique because of the ease with which they can be practised as well as for their capacity to influence human life. Whoever succeeds in understanding and implementing the formula of "each day a new birth and each night a new death" fully and comprehensively, is assured of a speedy progress towards self - evolution, commensurate with his efforts.

THE TWO FOUNDATION STONES OF SELF - EVOLUTION (INTERNAL PROGRESS) (MANAN OR SELF-APPRAISAL AND CHINTAN OR SELF ADVANCEMENT)

The structure of progress of the inner-self is supported on four pillars. Ancient Indian scriptures describe *Brahma* - the deity of creation, as having four faces in four directions. It is believed that each of HIS four mouths pronounced the basic tenets of wisdom, science, and religion as four *Vedas* - which lay down the codes of conduct for the mankind. A similar concept was made use of in the ancient four-fold classification of working classes of humanity (*Varna*) - now misconstrued as caste (by virtue of lineage). The quartered division of an average span of human life as the four *ashrams* - each with its specified code of conduct, too followed the same principle. The four basic requisites for the evolution of the inner self are

- (i) Atm Chintan (self-advancement)
- (ii) Atm Sudhar (self-improvement)
- (iii) Atm Nirman (self-reformation)
- (iv) Atm Vikas (self-development)

These disciplines are, however, coordinated and practised collectively. It is like taking a meal in which all dishes are consumed in a proportion at the same time. One can not live on bread for a few days and then change over to butter alone for the remaining days. The school curriculum prescribes teaching of say language, mathematics, geography and history. It would not serve any purpose if each subject is taught exclusively in successive years. Clothes are generally worn in combina-

tions. Is it possible to wear only shirt for a year and then trousers during the next or keep on wearing a part of the dress neglecting others? Co-ordination is the essence of work. Writing is not possible without co-ordination of paper, pen, ink and fingers. Extending this concept to the human system, we find that human body is composed of five basic elements (elementary extra-sensory constituents of body). The framework of the body is imparted animation by the vital-force (*chetan*) which also has five components (established by spiritual research). Individually, neither of the five elements nor components of vital-force will be able to sustain human existence. As an analogy take a pantry. The pantry needs four basic resources the fuel, water, food material and utensils cum cooking equipment. These are bare essential items for preparing a meal. For self-evolution too, one has to co-ordinate four types of activities viz. (a) an endeavour to identify one's own undesirable traits (b) a strong consistent effort to resist the inherent evil instincts, till these are totally eradicated. (c) a perseverant endeavour to appreciate and imbibe those virtues which have so far remained alien to the character and (d) to enlighten the largest possible number of people with the wisdom thus acquired. These four activities are required to be co-ordinated. The wise have termed them as *Atm-Chintan*, *Atm-Sudhar*, *Atm-Nirman* and *Atm-Vikas*.

The above four disciplines have again been grouped together in a couple of twin activities viz. *Manan*, and *Chintan*. *Manan* encompasses self-appraisal and eradication of undesirable traits. *Chintan* includes self-reformation or self-advancement. Both of these activities have been considered as inseparable constituents of *sadhana* of the inner-self (*Atm Sadhana*). One is advised to find a

minimum of half an hour for this propose either while leaving the bed in the morning or going to the bed in the night, or at any other time when one can afford to be relaxed and peaceful in a quiet place. *Manan* should be taken up as the first step followed by *chintan*. A tailor first cuts the cloth and later takes up stitching. In a surgical operation, incision is done before bandaging and application of medicine. For construction, foundation is excavated first before building the structure. Both these activities are inter-related and are taken up more or less simultaneously with a small time-lag. Nevertheless, *Manan* has a priority over *chintan*. For this propose, however, there are no pre-requisites of preparations for body and mind as necessary for other religious rituals. Nor any implements are required. Peace of mind and silence in the environment suffice. If mornings or evenings are not in spare, any period during the day may be chosen according to one's convenience. The duration of half an hour too is not absolutely necessary. This is only a working norm and may be extended or reduced as required. Nevertheless, maintenance of a fixed interval of time is recommended. It is a well established hypothesis that a work-plan based on a well designed time-structure and regularity produces much better results than haphazard and unsystematic efforts.

Atm chintan is in fact a self-counsel and self-advancement. It may also be viewed as an attempt at identifying one's own shortcomings and evil traits. In the laboratories, we carry out analysis and classification of materials to find out their constituents. An autopsy is carried out to examine conditions of internal organs and to find out the toxicity in the organs, if any. Pathological examinations of stool, urine etc. are needed for apprais-

ing the conditions of a patient. Appropriate treatment becomes possible only after diagnosis. The same analogy holds true for self-analysis which is carried out first with self-counsel or self-appraisal.

What should be the attributes of a noble, refined and cultured citizen? Which virtues are required to be associated in the qualities, actions and nature of this individual? To begin with, let us conceptualise a framework of such an ideal person. It is not difficult to fix the norms for the level of human dignity and its status. The qualities expected in an ideal man are a systematic daily routine, briskness in work, intellectual competence, proficiency in social interactions, far-sighted wisdom in contemplation, strict adherence to self-discipline, dependence on self and self-respect. He should be generous in character and humble in personality radiating happiness all around. Simplicity and nobility are inter-related. To be known as a cultured person one is required to systematically co-ordinate the inherent talents and the available resources for a useful purpose. A truly civilized man is fully aware of his duties and responsibilities and considers it obligatory to fulfill them.

In a true sense, these attributes are to be acquired essentially in order to justify one's existence as a 'human being'. Only that person has the right to be known as a civilized member of human community who is adorned by the quality of compassion for fellow human beings and possesses attributes worthy of a human being. To achieve the objective of self-counsel, one is advised to conceptualise a person possessing aforesaid virtues as an ideal and make a critical appraisal of one's own self with reference to the former. In absence of an ideal or stand-

ard, it is not possible to know the level of personal virtues and vices. A comparison with the wicked would only make us feel superior, whereas on the other hand looking upon men with super-human achievements would only bring in dissatisfaction and discontentment about our present inner status. Standards are necessary for any type of measurement. A critical appraisal can not be done without comparisons. It is absolutely necessary to know the standard for appraising the facts. Without being aware of normal body temperature, it is not possible to prescribe for a patient suffering from high fever or sub-normal temperature. Knowledge of average blood pressure is necessary for finding out abnormalities of hyper or hypo-tensions. In the same way some standards of nobility and humanitarian attributes are to be conceptualised for critically analysing whether one's own living-norms are of low, medium or high order.

We must ask ourselves whether the evil traits for which we dislike others, are present in our character? Whether we have those vices for which we despise others? Are we giving a treatment to others the like of which we would not like for ourselves? Whether the shortcomings we are preaching others to reform are part of our own character? Do we actually possess those qualifications for which we expect praise and status? When an attempt is made for self-appraisal by asking such questions and honest answers are sought to them, the good and evil traits inherent in character can be easily classified.

The task is; however, very difficult. Each one of us suffers from the weakness of self-prejudice. Eyes are always looking outwards without an awareness of

happenings behind retina. Ears, which are sensitive to external sound are incapable of hearing the continuous beat of sound of air passing through the lungs. We generally do not like people who point out our weaknesses. In absence of any previous experience, one feels bewildered while attempting self-appraisal. No one undertakes analysis of one's own character. Hence the process is not effective unless a capacity of strict impartial judgment is developed for identifying one's own weaknesses. With this it becomes very easy to take up the next phase involving proper appraisal of status of personal character with a view to attempting reform.

There is only one way to get rid of evil traits and that is to struggle with one's own self. The war mentioned as *Mahabharat* and the objective insisted upon by God incarnate, Shri Krishna in the Geeta, refer to this very internal struggle. The manifestation of divinity in human form is always a consequence of determination of divine powers to dispel the chaos and disorder prevalent in the human society (*adharm*). Incarnations (messengers of God) appear for this very purpose. Whenever divinity makes its presence felt in the human heart, the person tightens his belt to struggle against the evil traits which have become integral parts of thoughts and behaviour like close relatives. From time to time each incarnation has been determined to eradicate the forces of evil and assist in reinstatement of virtues. This process can also be viewed as dissociation of vices from personal life and augmentation of ideals therein. In whichever soul the divine light appears, its first indication is seen as reformation of the latent tendency of corrupt thinking which instigates the person to mischievous actions. These are akin to *Taadka*, *Soorpankha* and *Pootna* (demonic forces

mentioned in Indian epics) which had to be destroyed to uphold virtues.

Corrupt thoughts are overcome by confronting them with noble thoughts and in practice, bad habits are to be replaced with new good habits. In this process a type of internal struggle begins. This transformation is not possible casually by simply wishing. It requires strong will and power of determination. For inoculation against a disease, vaccine is produced from the virus of the same disease. To remove a thorn a sharp implement is needed. A physical assault is resisted with a stronger physical force. To defeat an army, another army is needed. For destroying a strong tank, anti-tank missile is used. In a struggle of any kind commensurate force is required. Similarly, the tendency of corrupt thinking can be counteracted by application of equally strong currents of righteous, noble thoughts. In order to extricate oneself from the sphere of influence of wickedness, an endeavour is to be made to enter into an environment of virtues conducive to moral upliftment. It is possible only by taking recourse to study of spiritual literature (*swadhyay*) and by seeking company and guidance of the spiritually wise (*satsang*). The counsel of close associates is generally conducive to promotion of selfish and mean activities. Rarely does one come across an environment which is counter-active to the former. Under the circumstances, one is recommended to study and imbibe the ideals propagated by great man and saintly super-humans. Their biographies and struggle in life for promoting ideals would become inspirational guidelines. It is generally not possible to meet such persons. Even when an interaction becomes possible, the time available is too short for fully comprehending their ideas and activities. Moreover, there

is a world of difference in their preachings in public and actions in personal life. Under the circumstances, the only simple and fool-proof method is to study such useful literature daily and regularly which is conducive to suggesting solutions to problems in life and is helpful in upgradation and progression of moral values. However, the resolve should not end only with reading. An enthusiasm should also be generated for imbibing the advocated ideals in practical life with a view to finding out ways and means for adopting them. The transmutation requires a continuous planning and structuring and re-structuring of the conceptual framework. This is the background against which the battle of *Mahabharat* within the inner-self is waged. Actually, the war begins with maintenance of a strict vigilance to restrain the familiar chain of evil thoughts from emerging and the sooner they appear eliminating them with a counter-force of virtuous ideas.

Whenever, temptation for sexual aberration arises, a movie of the consequential harms may be conceptualised and a panorama of advantages and illustrations of abstinence may be visualized. This is how the tug of war between the good and the evil thoughts begins. With a strong will and wisdom of a judge victory over the latter is assured, which are bound to make a hasty retreat. Truth has the power of a thousand elephants. The power of devil may appear intimidating and strong. Nevertheless, when confronted with the acid test of truth, it dissolves into nothingness. Within a short interval, it is found burnt out like a wooden pan in fire or disintegrated like a paper boat in water.

Evil traits are habit-forming. Time and again they keep on appearing in the behaviour. Like the aforesaid

struggle of thoughts, a strategy of struggle for actions (*karm sangharsh*) is, therefore, to be adopted. In a war, generally an infantry is found to be more effective against an infantry and an air force against air force. The keepers of prison maintain a constant strict vigilance against any possible disturbance by the prisoners. Likewise not only a strict watch is to be kept on the tendency of corrupt mind, one has to be vigilant at the same time against evil traits. As soon as they appear they are to be resisted. Whenever an urge for action based on bad habits arises, it should be resolutely replaced with a desire for correct course of action and with a strong will a firm decision has to be taken to suppress the undesirable and adopt what is right. In this process only the persons with weak-will need worry about failure. Others who can muster moral courage are assured of success accruing from establishment of high ideals in life. The strongest of evil can not withstand the least confrontation of a vigilant mind. Even a robust thief would think twice before entering a house, the inhabitants of which, though infirm, are wide awake. Likewise, the least resistance of good traits is sufficient to ward off strongest of evils.

In the beginning, attempts are made to resist the lesser evil habits, later progressively conquering the worst, older and deeply ingrained undesirable traits. Earlier smaller successes are conducive to increase in courage and self-confidence with which undesirable traits are gradually eliminated and replaced by virtuous tendencies. One should not feel contented only with the initial success and continue the efforts incessantly. It is not possible to get rid of the evil traits acquired during millions of earlier lives by simply making a resolution. (Indian spiritual research has established that human life is the ultimate

state of progressive evolution of soul in which the latter may have to pass through millions of lower forms of living beings in the biological kingdom). When resisted, these traits retreat and lurk in some corner of the subconscious, and at some unexpected moments appear with a much greater impact. Hence a constant vigilance is needed. Throughout life one has to be incessantly careful to ward off recurrence of evils of thoughts and behaviour.

The third phase of self-reformation consists of a planned endeavour for imbibition of characteristics of an ideal man, incorporating his attributes of character, actions and nature. After eradication of the evil, imbibition of virtues is also necessary. When a beautiful garden is being laid, preparation of ground by removal of wild growth constitutes only half of the work. The concluding half comprises planting, growing and maintenance of suitable flora. Remedial treatment of a disease serves only part of the objective. Subsequent convalescent care with appropriate food, rest and exercise are also to be looked into and provided for.

The reactions of attempts at shedding of lethargy should appear as development commensurate with interest and promptness for work. After getting rid of habit of carelessness and irresponsibility, a person should appear alert, absorbed in work, regular and systematic. Human dignity is manifested as ideal traits like warm-heartedness, civility, nobleness, far-sightedness, wisdom, honesty, self-restraint, frugality, simple living, compassion and yearning for service to others.

A persistent endeavour should be made to adopt

these virtues so that they become deeply ingrained in nature. People in general lay emphasis on accumulation of wealth and are ever busy utilising their energy, time and mental capability. Those who are interested in self-progress are advised to consider wealth and prosperity secondary to the celestial attributes of virtues. The one and only way of achieving success in both material and psychic world is to develop a high level of character. However, somewhat greater effort is needed for making virtues as part of nature than what is required for earning money. Wealth is also obtainable through inheritance, at times with little effort by coincidence, loan or donation; whereas for collection of virtues one has to mobilise resources bit by bit. It is totally result of one's own endeavour and enterprise. With imbibition of a habit of high level of contemplation and morality in behaviour, there is progressive augmentation of real wealth of virtues in character.

These achievements are, however, beyond the reach of persons with a fickle mind. It requires a firm resolution, resoluteness, persistent endeavour and unending perseverance. Hard work is pre-requisite to any achievement of consequence. Cultural evolution of personality is not possible without going through stresses and strains of noble thoughts and deeds. For achieving the ultimate goal of imbibition of an ideal personality, the aspirant continues to look for necessary ways and means. As a consequence of these very endeavours an overall transmutation towards a higher level of personality begins to appear in course of time.

The last phase of self-evolution (*atmotkarsh*) is self-development (*atm vikas*). It means increasing the sphere

of self-perception to an increasingly wider field. Persons whose interests remain confined exclusively to the conveniences of own body and mind are humanoid-worms(*nar keetak*). Next comes the category of men who keep their interests confined within the limits of their kith and kin. They are called humanoid-animals (*nar pashu*). Majority of people in this world are found engaged in thinking and acting conforming to the above two classes. Their 'self' does not transgress this limit. Thus, their precious life is spent in moving along the vicious circle of wants of family members and relatives. However, this is to be kept in mind that a human being has a higher status in the biological kingdom. In comparison to other life forms, the Creator has provided man with many unusual capabilities to be regarded as His celestial deposits kept in trusteeship. He expects them to be utilized for making humanity prosperous and well cultured. Human body is the supreme creation of God. It has been created for fulfilling high objectives. He has made an extra effort in creating man only with the expectations of associating man in his orderly management of the creation. Ignoring this mysterious object of human existence and usurping life in just for eating, procreation, greed and attachment, lust and longing, would mean that the value of this celestial gift was not appreciated; the soul had remained undeveloped in the lower form of life in earlier births and the purpose of life has been defeated.

The dignity of human being, who is considered as the prince of the creation lies in widespread expansion of his field of empathy. After taking care of the body and family appropriately, he should have a part of his working capability, time, intellectual capacity and resources to spare for human welfare schemes. With expansion of the

field of perception of intimacy with one's own body and family all living beings, become inter-linked in the same chain of empathy showing moments of happiness and adversity in equal measure. When the concept of man changes to consider entire humanity as his family (*Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam - Vishva Parivar*), none in the world remains alien (*Atmivat Sarvabhuteshu*). With this, the interest of the individual in self, transforms into the welfare of all. There appears a yearning to provide for everyone what was earlier desired for one's own self. One begins to extend the same behaviour and co-operation to others, which he expects from others. He begins to think and plan for social welfare, human-welfare and service to others. On reaching this state the field of activities of such a man expands much beyond those of an average human being and his area of operation becomes augmentation of virtuous traits and righteousness in an extensive area. Such persons throw their personal mean ambitions in the dustbin. They reduce their needs and after fulfilling the bare necessities, utilize their total capabilities and resources in the divine cause of human welfare. They derive so great a pleasure in their endeavours for the progress of the country, religion, society and culture, the like of which the self-centred persons can not dream of getting even on acquiring a large wealth.

Historical accounts and epics give vivid description of the glittering characters of such super-humans who had reached the pinnacles of success by following this very path of self-development. In the social sphere three types of persons viz. saints, reformists and martyres are given maximum respect. In the spiritual field too, there are three progressive stages of evolution of human soul -

the *mahatma* (evolved soul), *devatma* (divine soul an intermediate stage of evolution) and *parmatma* (the ultimate evolution of soul, when it becomes inseparable from the Divinity and is relieved of the necessity to appear in human form). For going through these stages of evolution, one has to follow the exclusive course of self-development described above. A change of individualism into humanitarianism forms the basis of world peace. The further we are able to extend our sphere of self-interest to encompass others, the more we may feel assured of having found the highway to the goal of human life.

SADHANA OF THE SUPREME DEITY GOD WITHIN SELF

In this world, vices and virtues are coexistent .They are also present within the subconscious levels of man. He has the freedom to choose and acquire either of them. The world is full of evil amoral elements. If one is on the look out for only such elements, makes a contact with them and adopts them, he would easily find himself engulfed in evil, both within and without. The magnetism of interest attracts like-people and resources from all around and soon the person finds himself fully surrounded by the environment of his choice. This hypothesis holds true as much for virtues as for vices. A corrupt person with evil traits continues to acquire resources, associates and environments of his choice with consequential achievements in his desired objectives. He finds himself securely lodged in the fortress of his choice. On the other hand, those who are intrinsically inspired towards higher ethical motives and are constantly making efforts in that direction, do not encounter any difficulty in identifying and associating with saintly persons; as a consequence of which a utilitarian environment begins to evolve and resources conducive to promotion of ideals are easily acquired providing motivation. With this, the person finds every moment of his life coming under the influence of divine attributes.

Just as tendencies pertaining to both good (*sat*) and evil (*tam*) (broadly speaking positive and negative aspects of life) are prevalent in the world, the sub-conscious levels of mind too are impregnated with these attributes. Any conscious effort for preference and strengthening of either of these tendencies results in their progressive augmentation, which on becoming sufficiently ingrained

in the subliminal inner consciousnesses begin to reflect outwardly in the manner of thinking and actions of the individual.

Persons having corrupt and evil interests remain engrossed in related ideas, which eventually make them seek like aims and objectives-for which they seek commensurate resources and make appropriate endeavours. All the activities in their life then begin to adopt the same orientation. In course of time, the small seed of evil aspirations grows into a large tree. On the other hand, where there exists a faith of *satogun* (positive values) and motivations for establishment of high ideals, the mind and intellect are naturally diverted to follow this right path. Drop by drop the wealth of idealistic thoughts and behaviour begins to accumulate providing the person with celestial divine attributes. With it, the presence of divinity within the person begins to become more and more transparent.

The school of *Advaita* science (the branch of research in spirituality propagating inseparability of soul from the Omnipotent God) advocates that God within and without the self is one and the same. Spiritual dictum like *Soham, shivoham, Tatvamasi, Aymatma Brahma* categorically state that soul (*atma*) is inseparable from the supreme being. Its independent existence as a separate being 'appears' because of the *avarana* (shell) of evil instincts and bad traits (*sansakars*) surrounding it. The moment these shells are removed, the being is released from the bondage and becomes one with the supreme being. Those experienced in science of spirituality have always maintained that the omnipotence of the Almighty has a seed in each human being. The moment

this seed is allowed to develop, the super being makes its presence felt in the person. The only objective of *sadhana* is *atm-sadhana* (self-rectification). *Tap* and *Upasana* are in fact means of purification of mind and sentience of a person. Scientists of the material world too are of the view that irrespective of the immensity of the cosmos (Brahmand), the properties of its smallest constituents i.e. atom do not differ from each other. The atomic-microbic activities of human body are only reflections of all those forms of energy, actions and reactions, which are intimately-imperceptibly impregnated in the cosmos. Human existence is in fact a small world within the body. Apparently, human beings do not appear more significant than a nest of humanoid worms (ever busy in eating, collecting and procreation). Nevertheless, when it is systematised and rectified, the body, mind and soul of man would appear to generate the three primary energies of the cosmos viz. that which controls life (*Bhu*), which dispels unhappiness (*Bhuvah*) and that which brings in happiness (*Swah*). The subliminal sub-conscious of man is in fact a storehouse of the above trinity of prosperity. The biggest challenge in life is to activate the centres of the above unseen energies and this very process is known as *sadhana*, *tapasya* (or other similar practices of spirituality for this objective).

The basic philosophy of *Atmdev* (extension of the omnipresent God within self) propagated by the *Vedas* (the primordial wisdom manifested by the Creator) has been dealt with in the ancient Indian treatise of *sadhana shāstra*. Herein, one finds detailed descriptions of grandeur of *Atmdev* and ways and means of establishing link with centres of cosmic energy present within the self. The exact locations of various deities in various parts of

human interior have also been discussed in symbolic manner. It shows that there is no source of energy in the world, which is not present in a miniature form within the human body. Hence human body should never be considered as a triviality. On the contrary one should see within it a reflection of the omnipotent God. One should not remain contented with the variety of worldly possessions and achievements. On the contrary, everyone should take pride in the existence of God within self. Maintaining His dignity, one should follow a way of life capable of protecting one's *atm-gaurav* (self-esteem) and making efforts to enhance it manifold.

Sciences of spirituality give vivid descriptions of rules and regulations of practising worship and adoration (*sadhana* and *upasana*) of *atm dev*. Followers of *nirakar sadhana* (an advance school of practice of spirituality, in which omnipresence of God without form is invoked), drill in perception of God as dazzling light of blue colour illuminating each and every particle of one's physical existence. It is conceptualised that high above in the space the *atm satta* (self-existence) is shining like a brilliant Sun having a faint blue colour. Its brightest celestial rays are penetrating each pore of the skin, invigorating the body, while entering the brain they are sharpening the intellectual capacity; on entering the heart which is the centre of sentience of soul, they are increasing the brilliance of *Atm Shakti* (self-potentiality). Conceptualise "I am being engulfed in radiance and floating unrestrained like a fish in an ocean of divine light."

For the above practice of *Prakash Dhyan* (meditation on light), initially one has to concentrate on a bluish-white flame of lamp lighted in front of eyes. As in the

case of *Tratak* (a method of meditation), one concentrates and conceptualises on the flame attentively, with slightly open and closed eyes. After some practice, the lamp is not needed and the light begins to appear by itself even when eyes are closed. Light blue colour is indicative of peace and purity. (This is why Rama, Krishana and other incarnations of God are visualised as having a body-colour of blue lotus.) The halo surrounding the great saints (not perceivable by physical means) too has a tinge of blue colour. For this reason, the *sadhana* of *Atamadev* involving descent of light, involves establishment of blue-hued light for meditation. While performing *Tratak* with the help of a lamp, the flame may be enclosed in a transparent blue chimney-which helps in the visual impression.

In *Sakar sadhana* (school of *sadhana* invoking a deity having form) one's own photograph is consecrated as the deity and worshipped according to specified rituals. The *Tantrik* methodology (a form of spiritual-practice, generally used for petty mundane advantage) aims at strengthening one's own astral body as '*Chhaya Purush*' (shadow person). With persistent *sadhana* at appropriate state, it becomes very strong and as an invisible potent friend, is always at hand to extend the required assistance. The 'shadow person' performs a variety of paranormal tasks like receiving information of persons and events from far off places, procurement of desired articles and helping in similar various activities. The five brave *baitals* of King Vikramaditya and the 'genie' of Aladdin's lamp, were only these 'shadow persons'. The human body comprises five independent *avaran* or *kosh* (shells) out of which only one-physical body (*annamay Kosh*) is visible. The five shells are *annamay Kosh*, *pranmay Kosh*, *manomay Kosh*, *vigyan*

may Kosh and *anandmay Kosh*. Each one of these five shells can be developed into independent loci of energy (*swanatra chetna*). In fact these are the five potent deities. One who succeeds in activating them from their dormant state, can hope to obtain substantial help from these five associates. While we ascribe the above shells status of 'shadow persons', in fact any deity which is believed to be conferrer of favours, is a creation of one's own faith. The potency of deity is found directly proportional to the degree of faith of the believer. The grace of God is nothing but reflections of one's own faith and belief. Whatever is considered as gain by the grace of God is in fact obtained from *Atmdevta*. While invoking deity, the believer attempts to derive only psychological advantage by conceptualising an unknown personage of supreme dignity. As a matter of fact, the favours obtained from the deity should be regarded as the grants bestowed by the believer on one's own self.

For practising *Sakar sadhana* (wherein the deity is conceptualised as having a form) of *Atmdev*, a mirror may be used. Here one keeps a large mirror in front and intently observes his own characteristics either in part or full. Then assuming the reflection in the mirror as an ideal and perfect deity, ritualistic oblations (*Panchopchar poojan dhyān, vandan, and stavan*) are made. The process of meditation is like this: "A faith is strengthened that an activation of the celestial light present within the body, if spiritually kindled can decisively become impregnated with divine power. He will then receive the privilege of opportunity to join the ranks of the 'super-humans' being revered by the humanity all over the world. Freedom from shackles of vices, bad instincts and evil traits is imminent. The process of rectification and purifi-

cation of evil within the self is about to be completed. The deity within is determined to succeed in its righteous objective of revelation." Invocation carried out with the above concept produces immediate results. The deeper one imbibes a perception of presence of omnipotence of God within one's body, the more he is inspired to think and act for furtherance of ideals. There is no need to emphasize that an upgradation of one's inner subliminal conscious to higher levels of purity is the only way of communion with God.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENT FOR SUCCESS IN SADHANA

Propriety of environment plays the most significant role in *sadhana*. A disconcerted state of mind and unfavourable environment are not helpful in any systematic routine for invocation of divine power. On account of deep involvement in an environment full of turmoil and intrigue, neither mind gets an opportunity for concentration nor any possibility arises to achieve the requisite degree of peace of mind for augmentation of faith. Under such circumstances, even the symbolic spiritual practices being followed by some continue to be disorganised and do not bear the desired fruits inspite of prolonged effort. Besides, the results obtained are not comparable with the achievements of those who had followed a systematic methodology. The reason for the failures lies in absence of appropriate environment. Where it is possible to create such an environment, the well known and acknowledged hypothesis of achievements of para-normal powers with the help of *sadhana* can be verified even today.

Environment of the place of residence does influence the resident. Environment comprises the traditions prevalent at the place and collectively, the interactions of people living at the place. The influence of environment is as profound as association with talented persons. The rituals of spiritual practices are comparable to manure and water needed for a plant. These are the basic pre-requisite for assurance of success in *sadhana*. Worship and adoration could be carried out anywhere. There are no taboos in this context. However, just as the best of caution and care would not make a plant grow and flower in an adverse climate, the regulations of *sadhana* too have a pre-condition of an appropriate environment.

The moral stature of residents of a place influences the type of events and activities taking place therein, which leave a distinct and long-lasting imprint on the invisible extrasensory elements of the environment (*sookchma sanskar*). After death, the *Pran* (vital force) of ascetics leaves a field of influence of their virtuous attributes around the place of their residence. There are known instances of tigers and cows living in peaceful co-existence around ancient hermitages. Deers and other animals and birds too become domesticated near such hermitages, shedding their sense of fear intrinsically. Such environments easily quell mental turmoil and by their very characteristics compulsively induce mind towards *sadhana*. History is full of narratives of events proving the relevance of influence of environment on events. The ancient war of *Mahabharat* was fought between brothers and relatives. Prior to the war, there was a possibility of a half-hearted agreement being reached between the two camps, because of the sentimental family attachments which would have been detrimental to the desired logical and effective conclusion. Being aware of the situation, Shri Krishna was on the look out for such an area for battlefield which had environment characteristics for instigating confrontation. After searching far and wide, his scouts did discover such a land which served the purpose.

This is how the scout described his experience. "It was raining and the fields were getting flooded. When a man working in the field made a request to his younger brother to stop the flow of water by raising a mud embankment, his younger brother reacted sharply and impertinently resorted to abusive language. Within moments, the elder brother became violent, killed the

younger one and dragged his body to use it as the embankment."

The above message was sufficient to make Shri Krishna guess about the predominance of elements of cruelty and indifference over love and co-operation in the environment of that place. In fact, this was the reason for choice of Kurukshetra as the battlefield for the war of *Mahabharat*. The total annihilation of the clan in mutual confrontation later, confirmed this influence if environment.

There is another anecdote about Shravan kumar who was very much devoted to his parents. He was going on a pilgrimage with his blind parents. Since no transport was available in those times, he prepared *kavar* (a shoulder borne carrier for two persons) and began his journey. After completing most of it happily, he stopped at a place and put the *kavar* down on the ground. He then suddenly asked his parents to walk, telling that though blind, they were not lame. The parents of Shravan kumar were surprised on this sudden change in his behaviour. Using their para-normal powers, they came to know that the environment of the place was not congenial and there were possibilities of some catastrophe. To avoid it, they left the place hurriedly.

This legend described in the epic *Mahabharat* also tells about remorse and lamentations of Shravan Kumar after leaving the above area. He once more insisted on carrying his parents on *kavar*, which later established an ideal of dedication of a son to his parents. His father now gave an explanation of these unusual changes in the behaviour of his son. The place of incident, he told was

once inhabited by a cruel demon *May* who had killed his parents. He left imprints of his cruelty on the environment of the place which had agitated his (Shravan kumar's) mind. On leaving the place, his natural instincts were reinstated.

A survey of various regions of the world would show that environment of the place has appreciable influence on its animate as well as inanimate constituents. In cold countries, people are generally fair in complexion, relatively strong in body and have a greater longevity. On the other hand, in regions of extremely warm climate, the inhabitants are dark coloured and generally weaker in constitution. The same holds true about the flora. The efficacy of herbs depends on the place where they are grown. Herbs like *Brahmi* cultivated on the banks of the Ganga in Himalayan region are far more superior to the produce obtained from the fields adjoining canals in the plains.

In this country, Bhusaval is famous for its bananas, Nagpur for its oranges and areas around Lucknow for mangoes and watermelons. Apples of kashmir have their own specific characteristics. Sandalwood obtained from plantations in Mysore is more fragrant than anywhere else. Plants and seeds taken from nurseries would also grow at other places but the specific characteristics of Mysore sandal would be lacking. Qualities of cereals and vegetables also differ from place to place. The wheat grown in Punjab is found superior to that of other places. The credit for the quality, however, does not go to the farmer but to the soil and climate of the place which we may call the influence of environment. Animals too are influenced by environment. Cows and bulls of Kutch,

Haryana and Nagaur are known to be more productive and hardy. It is well known that in Bengal and south Bihar, relatively weaker livestock is found. The reason for it, however, is not in their breed but the environment. A suitable change in place shows an improvement in breed. Superior breed of animals brought from other countries gradually lose characteristics of their original habitat. Bears, dogs and other animals brought from cold countries find it difficult to survive in warm climate. Even where they do, it is with special provisions of refrigeration.

Influence of environment is not confined only to animal and plant life. It substantially affects the human beings as well. If one is made to stand at an inconspicuous graveyard even without being aware of it, a feeling of fear casually creeps in. Animals are frequently taken by their masters from one place to other, but when butchers take them to butchery, they are found extremely terrorized.

We are discussing the significance of environment in *sadhana*. The foregoing examples are only indicative of the apparent extensive effect of environment on material objects. For *Tap-sadhana* (sadhana of ascetics) too, an appropriate environment is required to be created. For fructification of efforts of *sadhana* by activating the dormant capabilities of inner-self, the extra-sensory environment has to be electrified..

Just as eggs are fertilized close to the breast of the hen but also need the warmth of the body in order to be effectively and successfully hatched, the daily routine of *sadhana* being undertaken anywhere requires appropriate

environment and proximity of a suitable catalyst. It is possible by seeking an effective intellectual guidance from any quarters. The need can also be fulfilled by consultation of relevant literature and through correspondence. But this much is not sufficient to achieve the purpose of instillment of the degree of maturity in the innermost levels of conscience and for developing dynamism.

An augmentation of wisdom in the inner self is also possible by hearing to the sermons of the wise. But for receiving the charge of vital energy (*Pran*), closeness of an appropriate powerhouse (Guru and spiritual-environment) for some time is absolutely essential. It serves the purpose of interflow of vital energy. The fortunate ones get this opportunity and succeed in reaching the higher levels in *sadhana*. In ancient days, uninhabited forests (*Aranayaks*) provided appropriate environment for the combined necessity of *upasana* and *sadhana*. For extensive medical care, it becomes necessary to seek admission in a nursing home where the patient remains under constant observation of well qualified expert medical practitioners who continue to diagnose and prescribe in conformity with changing state of health of patient. This advantage is not available with the casual visits of doctor at home who does not get enough time to examine the patient for correct diagnosis and prescription. Under latter circumstances, success in treatment depends more on patient's luck than anything else.

Like various fields of learning, such as wrestling, art, education and specialisation in various sciences, the objective of high levels of *sadhana* too, is to develop an expertise in the relevant subject. It also needs an appro-

priate environment for learning. For the other fields, the expertise is developed by spending time at places like gymnasium, college laboratories etc. Merely books cannot provide that knowledge which it becomes possible to impart by actual consultation with an expert and by experimentation in laboratory. The bookstalls of the world are full of books on medicine, law, audit, engineering-expertise, art, and other subjects. These can also be studied at ease at home, but in absence of practical experience, this exercise produces little results. For developing an expertise, one needs commensurate environment, resources, opportunities of being subjected to examination and rectification of errors. Otherwise, success can never be assured. In this world, activities related to self-evolution are much more important than those for success in any other worldly affair. However, the former require greater efforts. For a higher level of achievements in this context suitability of environment is an absolute necessity.

In order to get rid of their unnecessary attachments and established traits, all great men and *Rishis* (saints) have found it necessary to shift their fields of action elsewhere away from the places of their upbringing.

The fields of work of Christ, Mohammad, Buddha and Gandhi were not the places of their birth. The saints of northern India moved to work in the southern part of the country whereas those born in south chose north India for their working field. Adya Shankracharya was born at Kerala and Ramanujam in Tamilnadu. They did not lack patriotism for the places of their birth but found that shackles of subliminal traits (*sanskars*) developing out of personal attachments were impediments to achievement

of that level of maturity in character which was essential for endeavours for higher goals of *sadhana*. None of the saints like Gyanneshwar, Namdev, Eknath, Nanak, Kabir, Samarth, Paramhans, Chaitanya and others, chose the place of living as the area of their work.

For specialized *sadhanas*, one is recommended to consider the Himalayas and the banks of the Ganga as a suitable venue. Excellence of atmosphere and extra-sensory environment around the place of *sadhana* is inter-linked with peace of mind within. The cultural heritage of the land of the Himalayas is as lofty as its physical configuration. It has had a long heritage of honesty and civility of its residents. In spite of abject poverty and little education, the inhabitants of the Himalayan region have managed to maintain a high level of integrity. An example of their dependability is the honesty of porters used by the trekkers who hardly find any cause for complain.

In ancient times, the *Himalayan* region was known *Swarga* (heaven). Numerous evidences testifying to this statement have been published in a series of articles in "Akhand - Jyoti". This in fact was the abode of divine people. Even today, followers of theosophical Society believe in existence of celestial beings in the Himalayas. Persons engaged in spiritual research have been finding it necessary to move from one cave in Himalayas to other in search of means of para-normal (occult) powers. In order to perform specialized *sadhana*, *Bhagwan* Ram, along with his brothers, had migrated to hermitage of Guru Vashista around Devprayag in the *Himalayas* from his native place Ayodhya. Shri Krishna, who was brought up in Gokul, planned the Mahabharat in Kurukshetra and finally settled in Dwarika, too had to do *tapasya* in

Badrinath during his *sadhana*. The Pandavas did not perform their final *sadhana* in their capital Indraprastha but had undertaken their final journey upwards in *Himalayas*. King Bhagirath would not have found that level of asceticism possible during the course of his administration, as was necessary for manifestation of the holy river Ganga. For this purpose, he had to camp at the snout of Gangotri glacier. King Vishwamitra too could not have succeeded in his fundamental research on Gayatri at the place of his kingdom. The emperor Bharat was brought up in the hermitage of Rishi Kanva and the twin sons of Ram, Lav and Kush spent their childhood at that of Balmiki. Both achieved unparalleled expertise which they would never have got at some hostel or with the comforts of home.

It has now been established that the legendary celestial beings like Indra were in fact living in the *Himalayas* which was called *Swarg*. Mount Kailash and the mountain range called Sumeru are known as the abode of gods. The celestial garden called Nandan Van belongs to this place. Lore on *Swarg* are substantiated by many geographical evidences from this area. The historians mention about the incoming of the Aryans from Central Asia to India through Tibet and the *Himalayas*. This belief also confirms the existence of capital of divine people (*devtas*) in this region. Immortals like Hanuman and Ashwatthama are also believed to be living in this region. History has been a witness to fulfilment of ascetic practices of most of the *Rishi* in the *Himalayas*.

The cave of Guru Vashistha was located in these very hills. The eighteen Puranas (explanatory treatises on the original manifestations of wisdom by the Creator,

known as *Vedas*) were written by Vyas and Ganesh at a place called Vasodhara which is known to exist in this region. Amongst the well known brilliant *Rishis*, Parshuram, Vishwamitra and Dadhichi performed their ascetic practices in the *Himalayas*.

This region is the abode of Shiva. Both his wives belonged to this region. It has been the source of many sacred rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna. It would not be an exaggeration to regard *Himalayas* as the nursery of spiritual leaders of Bharat (modern India is a part of it). In the shadow of this personified deity, many have been blessed with numerous known and unknown achievements. This capacity remains unexhausted till day. The health-promoting ingredients of the *Himalayas* make it the most suitable place of living in the entire country. Environment of this region is eternally conducive to mental peace and progress of the innerself. Many herbs like Brahmi, Ashtavarg, Shilajit (An organic encrustation) though found and cultivated elsewhere as well, have the maximum amount of useful ingredients only in the *Himalayas*.

The presence of shadow (protection) of *Himalayas*, lap (bank) of the Ganga and the ethereal enchanting atmosphere around it, if also found associated with strong protection and expert guidance of an experienced *Guru*, should be considered as a rare opportunity for *sadhana* and a fortune for the *sadhak*. Saptasarovar is the place where the most famous seven *Rishis* had performed their ascetic exercises in ancient times. This area is even today impregnated with the spiritual characteristics necessary for *sadhana*. History has it that King Bharathari, had developed an impassioned longing to enjoy

celestial happiness by living in a similar environment. For this, he had abdicated his throne and by adopting a divine life-style of an ascetic (*Yogī*), succeeded in achieving his aim of life. Before this, he was always day-dreaming about this rare happy opportunity. Bharthari Shatak (an ancient Sanskrit epic composed by Bharthari) has given a vivid description of his emotional outburst.

Sadhana performed on the banks of the Ganga has a special significance. The effect would be much more extraordinary, if it is performed on an uninhabited island of land surrounded by the water of Ganga river. An environment congenial for the *Brahmvarchas sadhana* has been created in the hermitage with aptness of the location for daily dip in the Ganga, exclusive use of its waters for drinking and spending day and night in proximity of the river. It has become possible only with divine grace. For construction of hermitage, most honestly earned money however, small in quantity, has been incessantly pouring forth with great faith and humility. Authors of ancient literature on spirituality have described the significance of proximity of the Ganga as a suitable place of *sadhana* in these words

"yatra Ganga Mahabhaga Sa Deshastattpovanam
Siddhkchetrantu Tajgyeya Gangateeram Samasritam"
- Koorma Puran

Wherever the auspicious Ganga exists, the neighbouring uninhabited woodland is the place worthy for ascetic exercises (*Tapovan*). Such an area is provenly bestower of para-normal achievements (*Siddha Kchetra*).

Geographically Mount Kailash and lake Mansarovar continue to be part of the *Himalayas*. Ancient spiritual

literature mentions about emergence of Ganga from over the head of Shankarji (personification of reformatory power of divinity) who dwells in Mount Kailash. The mountain peak of Kailash, however, could hardly have been the present mount situated in Tibet, since geographically it is not possible for the Ganga to flow upto the present source of the present position at the snout of the Gangotri glacier at Gaumukh. The distance between the present Kailash and Gangotri through Jelukhaga valley is about 480 km. Besides, there are a number of transverse ranges which would not permit flowage of any river or glacier from Kailash to Gaumukh. The *Shiva Lok* mentioned in the ancient literature could only have existed in the "Swarg" in this very part of the *Himalayas* (around Gangotri glacier). The Gangotri glacier - the snout of which forms the source of the Ganga is in fact situated near the *Shivaling* (the tapering perennially snow clad peak believed to be the abode of Lord Shiva). Here, there is also a river called "Swarga Ganga" and a lake known as Gauri sarover ((Gauri is consort of Shiva). All these evidences leave little doubt that Kailash, the abode of Shiva - the upholder of the Ganga, could only have been situated in the heartland of the present Himalayas. Had it not been the case, there would not have been any need for Bhagirath to perform his ascetic exercise (*tap*) at this place. He would have gone to the present Kailash in Tibet to appease Shiva. At this celestial place the three well known abodes of Shive viz. Shivaling, the summit of Kedar and Neelkantha are also situated. Mansarover, too could have been somewhere in this abode of gods. The place where the eight Vasus settled is now known as Vasudhara and is located near Alkapuri (the snout front of Satopanth glacier). The existence of places like Suralaya, Himdhara, Satpath and Varun Van in this area also sup-

ports the view that it was, in fact, the *Swarg* where gods lived (Devbhoomi). The foretold considerations leave little doubt about the existence of the historical Kailash and Mansarover in this part of the *Himalayas*.

Day by day, the Kailash in Tibet is becoming less and less inhabited because of restrictions imposed on foreigners. Fear of life and property haunts the place. It is also very far from the mainland of India. The environment too is totally un-Indian with a different culture and language. A visitor to the place find himself an alien. It is possible that in ancient times when culture of Bharat was widely acclaimed, it could have been a place of pilgrimage. But today, to look for actual abode of Shiva, the original source of the river Ganga and the actual celestial lake Mansarover, we may have to identify the authentic Kailash in the "Swarg" of this land within the heartland of the Himalayas.

The publication 'Autobiography of a Yogi', makes a mention of many unusual feats of the Himalayan Yogis possessing para-normal powers. Researches by Paul Brinton and Wbsang Rumpa have also found evidences of existence of such persons in this area. Swami Krishnacharya who is known to have lived for two centuries and had laid the foundation stone of Hindu Vishvavidyalaya (university) lived in this very region. As a naked saint (avdhoot), he spent his life in this permanently snow covered terrain. The writer of these lines is amongst those persons who have been meeting and interacting with many such persons possessing extraordinary para-normal capabilities who are living in the interiors of the Himalayas in physical or astral form.

The Himalayas abound in so many big and small places of pilgrimage, the like of which are not to be found elsewhere. Around the well known pilgrimage centres of Amarnath, Jwalamukhi, Haridwar, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Pashupatinath, there are scattered numerous smaller pilgrimage centres. On the route from Rishikesh to Badrinath itself, there are many places of religious interest like Devprayag, Rudraprayag and Karnaprayag. Elsewhere are situated Uttarkashi, Guptkashi, Tungnath, Trijugarayan, Divyakashi and so many other centres. The creative aspect of *Shiva* and *Shakti* are illustrated in numerous temples in around hundreds of villages in the Himalayan region. It was the venue of ascetic self-immolation of Sati as well as in her next birth of tap *sadhana* (ascetic exercises) of Parvati. The celestial dance of Shiva (tandav) was actually performed in the Himalayas. There are lores mentioned about the places of establishment of his 'Trishul' (trident) somewhere near Uttarkashi. The ancient sages Jamadagni and Parashuram had completed their *tap-sadhana* in Uttarkashi.

The extensive Himalayan terrain has been, since time immemorial, a laboratory of research and experimentation on significant disciplines like Ayurveda, Chemistry, warfare and creation of literature on spirituality and *Yoga*. It has been the working field of the well-known seven *Rishis* the most wise divine-men (*Dev manav*). In ancient times residential universities (Gurukuls) and places of ascetic practices (*Aranyak*) were established only in the Himalayan region. Many heads of religious schools like Vashistha, who were appointed as counsellors to emperors and kings, hailed from this region. The enchanting valley and caves of the Himalayas have, time and again, been made fragrant with various activities of almost all

Rishis of repute.

Benefitted by the guidance of *Rishis*, the thirty-three crores Bhartiyas of greater Bharat (now India is a part of it) had earned the distinction of being called as thirty-three crore deities (*devtas*). By virtue of its celestial-physical and metaphysical characteristics, this land of Bharat had been known to the world as superior to 'swarg'. (*Swaragadapi Gariyasi*). This, region has not only been the source of the holiest river Bagirathi (the Ganga in plains), it has also been the seat of learning and research of *Devlok* (*Swarg*), wherefrom the celestial wisdom has continued to originate and flow as *Gyan Ganga* (the Ganga of wisdom).

The objective of the foretold narrative is just to emphasise that this part of the Himalayas has been the area of the activity of deities (divine men), *Rishis*, philosophers and ascetic *sadhaks*. Since this terrain is still impregnated with supra-fine elements of their piety of high density, it is much more suitable for performing *sadhana* than any other place.

The decision for the choice of land for establishing the hermitage of Shantikunj at Sapta Sarover near Haridwar, was taken after careful considerations of all advantages. Haridwar is the gateway to the Himalayas (here the spiritually charged terrain of the north-western Himalayas has been referred to as Himalaya). At this very place Sati the consort of Shiva, voluntarily obliterated her physical body to the elements of combustion, in order to purify her soul and take a rebirth as Parvati. Saptapuri, a shrine of religious historical significance is situated at Haridwar which includes Mayapuri-Haridwar as well. The

historical significance of the celestial terrain of the seven streams (*saptadhara*) of the Ganga, has been described in this way. Before the advent of the Ganga, the famous seven sages (*saptarishi*) were engaged in meditation and ascetic practices at this place. When the Ganga descended down to the plains, it bypassed the seven hermitages of the sages and without damaging them divided itself into seven streams to continue its journey downstream. The breath taking view of the sub-division of the river into channels may be seen in the valley. The hermitage of Shantikunj is built on a levelled palaeo-channel of the Ganga where it flowed till about hundred years from now. In order to save denundataion of land from cascading waters of the river on entering the plains, a dam was built across the river. Consequently, the flow of the river was delimited to the present course and the land where Shantikunj exists was reclaimed for farming.

In other words, beginning from its appearance during Satyug, the Ganga had continued to flow at the place occupied by Shantikunj till about a century ago. Even today the water table of the wells in the hermitage reacts to the rise and the fall in the level of the main stream of the Ganga. Geomorphologically, the land of Shantikunj is separated from the present channel by only a thin stratum of sand. The subterranean water table is one and the same in the area. Evidences of the palaeo-channels are found in the widespread occurence of rounded river-borne pebbles and sand at various levels in the hermitage. At present, the main stream is flowing at a distance of 400 meters from the hermitage and is clearly visible from its premises. Except from the direction of entrance, the hermitage presents an enchanting panoramic view of the Himalayas all around it. From higher eleva-

tions at this place (with the help of binocular) one can see even snow clad ranges on a clear day.

The location of hermitage shantikunj has a combination of three unique celestial-characteristics. One - it is "born" (built on) from the "womb" (palaeo-channel) of the holiest river, the Ganga; two - it is under the canopy (protection) of the mighty Himalayas and three - it is impregnated with palaeo-energy (charge of spirituality) from the ascetic paractices of the supreme seven sages (*Saptrishi*). Thus, for performing *sadhana*, from every point of view including tradition or heritage, it continues to be "live" and full of vitality ever since Satyug. Besides, personal efforts have also been made to add to the effectiveness of this place. A flame lighted with butter oil (*ghrit*) and kept perpetually burning for the last sixty-eight years has been consecrated at a temple in this hermitage. Around the temple of Gayatri, *Jap* undertaken with other ascetic regulations for a fixed number and period continue to be performed incessantly round the clock. Well organised Gayatri *yagyas* are being performed daily without any break, whatsoever. With some of my own "earnings of *Tap sadhana*" (spiritual energy acquired through asceticism) also, I endeavour to create such characteristics in the environment which are spontaneously transmuting the inhabitants of the hermitage making them spiritually charged.

For progress of the inner-self, the traditionally best environment has been found in the lap (bank) of holy Ganga (mother) and shelter of the Himalayas. The history of *sadhana* indicates that by virtue of living in such a terrain, the communities of *Rishis* and *sadhaks* had succeeded in acquisition of desired vital energy (*pran*

chetna). The *Rishis* who were born in various parts of the world, had renounced their homes and migrated to above areas in search of appropriate environment, spiritual guidance and assistance. During this process they might have found some inconveniences, as is natural in any change. Nevertheless, on appreciating the advantage of change, they had overlooked many comforts and decided to stay here permanently to become an integral part of the environment. They hardly ever thought of returning to their native places. For this very reason, the banks of the Ganga in the Himalayas have been the abode of *Rishis* since time immemorial. In spite of environmental degradation in course of centuries, the terrain continues to be charged with energy of spirituality to a greater extent.

Gayatri Nagar has been developed in this very land where the seven *Rishis* performed their *sadhana*. It is in true sense a "live place of pilgrimage" (Jeevant Teerth). An attempt has been made to incorporate all those features in the practices of God-realization (*Brahmavarchas prakriya*) being followed in Gayatri Nagar which characterised the ancient schools of research in spirituality (*Aranyak*).

Apparently like other terrains, this piece of land too appears to be indistinguishable from other similar areas in the Himalayas. But those having para-normal vision (*sookchma drishti*) will not have any difficulty in peeping beyond and seeing that the fundamental ingredients for success of *sadhana* are present here in much greater density than anywhere else in the Himalayas.

The process of God-realization (*Brahmavarchas prakriya*) of Gayatri nagar, has in true sense rendered it

sadhana-prone for higher performance (of *sadhana*). All essential prerequisites for *sadhana* are present at this place. To be called "live" and "awake", a place of pilgrimage must have perfect coordination of spiritual tradition and activities to preserve and perpetuate the heritage. There is no dearth of historically significant centres of pilgrimages in the world but hardly does any provide the vital energy field (*pranvan oorja*) of ancient *aranyak*s in high density, as is present in Shantikunj, Haridwar.

THE PRIMARY INGREDIENT FOR PROGRESS OF THE INNER -SELF SHRADDHA (DEVOTION TO EXCELLENCE)

It is seen that inspite of adopting the same *mantra* and identical procedures of *sadhana* under the patronage of the same Guru, the rate of progress of inner-self in the *sadhak* varies from person to person. Some experience a faster self-advancement whereas for others the progress is slow. Why does it happen? Scholars of spirituality have given a succinct explanation of this phenomenon- 'In the field of spirituality, *shraddha* (faith -devotion -sincerity -surrender) reigns supreme.' Just as in the physical world, the forces of nature are responsible for all actions, reactions and consequences thereof, the miracles in the field of spirituality depend on the intensity of *shraddha* in the *sadhak*. In absence of *shraddha*, spiritual practices are reduced to meaningless rituals and the efforts involved in them hardly produce any results. About significance of *shraddha*, the Creator of Geeta says:

"Shraddhamayoayam Purushoyo Yachchrdha sa Evsah"
(Geeta 17/3)

Concept:

"It is the *shraddha* of the worshipper which makes even the inert stone idols 'live' and reactive to his entreaties whereas capacity of para-normal miracles becomes attributed to the deity or shrine "

It is said that by virtue of her strong intensity of *shraddha*, the legendary princess poetess Meera had made her idol of Krishna so much reactive that it ap-

peared to her more "living" than Krishna in person. There is an interesting incident in the great epic Ramayana about *shraddha* and belief. While bridging the ocean, the bears and apes (symbolic names given to warriors of various racial descent) pronounced the name of Ram with intense *shraddha* and it made stones float on water. On the other hand, when Ram himself threw stones, they sank in. Quoting this incident, the scholars of spirituality advocate that the name Ram is more powerful than Ram himself. However, here it must be understood that by itself the word Ram has no strength, whatsoever. The power lies in the *shraddha* (faith) accompanying the enunciation of the name which imparts it para-normal capabilities. Maharishi Patanjali - the foremost authority on yoga, propounds that "*Asanpragyat samadhi*" (a higher level of meditation) is achieved by any one with the help of *shraddha*. He says :

"Shraddhavirya smriti Samadhi Pragyapoorvak Itresham"
(Yogdarshan 1/20)

In the field of spirituality, the power of *shraddha* is supreme. On the physical plane, the above power supports various types of activities and the resultant objectives are realised. Similarly, *shraddha* remains at the roots of all psychic processes of the inner-self. When developed in high intensity, it produces miracles. Any activity devoid of *shraddha*, is utterly meaningless. Rarely does it produce any useful result. In day-to-day interactions between people too, *shraddha* and belief constitute the basis of credibility. In absence of self-confidence which is nothing but *shraddha* in one's own self, one finds it impossible to attempt some higher goal. Valour and courage are only synonyms for self-confidence

whereas aspirations and zeal are only reflections of self-confidence. In a family only an understanding of personal relationship and close intimacy establishes the strong ties of mutual affection and cooperation. It is nothing but *shraddha* which forms the basis of blessing of love and condescension in the family with which each member is ever ready to do maximum sacrifice for others. A disruption in the chain of mutual *shraddha* would certainly result in disintegration of the family. In absence of *shraddha*, the family members would resort to infighting on the smallest pretext and will thus soon disperse and disorganise. Belief, credence, faith, trust, reliance, dependence, devotion and confidence are all components of *shraddha*.

In every field of human activity such as agriculture, industry, crafts and sports, successful operation depends on faith in propriety of the work. Interactions between businessmen depends only on reliance. The banking system which takes large risks in advancing loans, depends only on credibility. Industry depends totally on the mutual faith between the workers and the managers. While taking meals we have to keep faith in the cook who is otherwise capable of killing the entire family by poisoning the food. It is only faith which allows us to entrust our entire property to the spouse who could easily run away with all the wealth. With all such apprehensions in life, man feels secured only under the umbrella of faith. For one who totally lacks faith, the question of undertaking any business does not arise. Such a person would only be able to live a dreadful life full of apprehensions and would hardly have a peaceful moment. He would not be in a position to confide in or open his heart to anyone on personal secret matters. As a consequence

he would be forced to live a perpetually apprehensive life of a deranged person suffocating within himself with a mind full of unexpressed desires.

Thus one finds that it is impossible to live in this world without *shraddha* (interaction in worldly matters) whereas in the field of spirituality, *shraddha* is considered as the 'most essential vital force (*pran*)'. Followers of idealism are apparently losers but cherishing *shraddha* in the pursuit of high principles enables them to bear the inconveniences of selfless relinquishments and sacrifices willingly and happily. The existence of God and soul is not verifiable in any laboratory. On the other hand, it remains an undisputable, eternal truth exclusively established by *shraddha* (faith).

The character and personality of a person which is greatly influenced by his inherent traits and behavioural patterns reflect only his confirmed beliefs which is nothing but *shraddha* in certain ideologies. Each individual has his own characteristic habits and dogma deeply imbibed in his character which he is not prepared to discard ordinarily. These deeply ingrained traits (*sanskars*) are in fact developed by prolonged repetitions of thinking, believing and translating into actions a set of ideas. Most of these traits are often irrational bordering on dogmas based on superstitions which do not stand the test of logic; but the individual is so strongly attached to them that he begins to see "truth" in them. With his conviction in the preconcieved notions, he exhibits an adamantine attitude in advocating his ideology as the absolute truth based on facts, for which he is always prepared to take confrontation with anyone and everyone. This stubbornness in convictions is nothing but a play enacted by his *shraddha*.

The force of logic too is born out of the womb of *shraddha*. Although logic gives birth to *vicharna* (discriminatory thinking) and *shraddha* to *vishwas* (conviction), yet the former (*vicharna*) too needs a base for ideology (*vichar*) which can not be established without faith or *shraddha*. Otherwise, merely with the help of logical thinking, it is not possible to channelise the contemplatory processes of self-advancement (*chintan*) in any direction. It is only made possible with the faith accompanying deep contemplation on the accepted ideology. In other words, it is not possible to do logical and discriminative thinking without the help of *shraddha*. Faith is always at the root of formulation of logic on any ideology, contemplation thereon and is also inspirational in seeking the truth. *shraddha* is intimately assimilated in human character, without which ambitions of advancement and progress will never be fulfilled. It is not possible even to live for a moment without *shraddha*. The fact that man remains oblivious to its existence is inconsequential.

Deep penetration on the subject (*sookchma drishti*) enlightens that the entire process of perpetuation of life and its various achievements are in fact products of *shraddha*. A mother bears the child in her womb for nine months as an integral part of her body. She makes a sacrifice of her own flesh and blood to nourish the child. It is an example of a high level of *shraddha*, the seed of which is sown in the being during its development in the womb. The mother provides protection to the child selflessly. Would it be possible for a newly born to come into existence, if woman considered it illogical and unnecessary to bear the burden of discomfort?

It is *shraddha* only which makes a child yearn and

wail for closeness of mother's breast, for her love and affection. Devoid of language and speech, the new born depends only on *shraddha* in mother. On the other hand, the parents endeavour to make every possible effort for the development of the child. They make all sorts of troublesome arrangements for the training of the child. In this endeavour, their only objective is the total development of the personality of child. From the point of view of logic, every effort in this world must be utilitarian. Judging against this criterion, parents would consider nurturing children as a losing proposition from every point of view. Thus, barely logic of consideration would endanger the very existence of child. If profitability becomes the sole consideration of man, the institution of family and society would disintegrate. In such a situation, civilization can not hope to survive for long.

The strong bond of affection keeping the family together is made of *shraddha* only. It inspires each member to cooperate and overlook own interests for the benefit of other members of the family. Where it is absent, the family disintegrates. Bitterness amongst the spouses and clash of interests between members of family occurs because of lack of *shraddha*. From the point of view of logic and utility, there does not seem to be any necessity to support even old parents. They would appear only as unnecessary burden. Considerations of *shraddha*, however, apprise the person of the gratitude due to them. Throughout life, one yearns for their blessings and affections. These sentiments are gifts of *shraddha* only which always keep a strong youth humble in his interactions with the infirm parents.

Shraddha is the oven in which the character of a

person is moulded. Once *shraddha* is recognised as a fundamental ingredient of life, a need is felt to make it intensified, rectified and mature. This is not possible without taking the help of concept of existence of the Supreme Being. Faith in existence of God and an endeavour to establish a link with him results in the direct apparent benefit of strengthening of convictions in high ideals. With it, the individual is transmuted into a person reflecting presence of divinity in his supra-conscious (which is an extension of the omnipresent God within as soul). It is reflected as development of faculty of idealistic contemplation within and performance of activities promoting high ideals without.

Shraddha may be regarded as the seed of greatness. It sprouts, grows and matures to make life a repository of great achievements. In this way, it becomes comparable to *Kalpavriksha* (a tree in heaven which is said to grant all wishes). The full potential (*varchasva*) of sentience (*chetna*) in the being is manifested in this manner. The courage and strength which transmute the animal in man into a civilised person and upgrade him into a super-human and then to the status of a saint, is made feasible only with the help of *shraddha*. *Shraddha* and theism are inter-dependent. The direct evidence of grace of God descends on man as nothing else than *shraddha*. With progressive increase of this element, the possibility of glorification of life is confirmed in commensurate proportion. This element of *shraddha* may be considered as the foundation on which the structure of *Riddhis* and *Siddhis* (para-normal control over sensory and extra-sensory elements) is erected. There is absolutely no doubt about *shraddha* being an indirect consequence of theism. Even where there is an element of doubt in the

efficacy of worship for achievement of direct results, the gift of *shraddha* by the Almighty itself should be viewed as His extraordinary favour.

Shraddha is the strongest - the most ideal force, providing a meaning to life. Emerging from ethereal supra-conscious level, it illuminates entire life with peace, happiness and prosperity. In its extended sense, *shraddha* means an unwavering devotion (*astha*) to high ideals. Such a conviction when translated into principles (*sidhanta*) and action in worldly affairs is called "*nishtha*", whereas in the realms of philosophy and metaphysics where considerations on the reality of soul, life and faith in God are involved, it is known as *shraddha*.

Astha (faith) inspires, activates, provides momentum in progress and enlightens the field of contemplation. In absence of *astha* in life, it is impossible to move in the direction of self-advancement. *Nishtha* gives rise to *sankalp* (determination). *Sankalp* produces courage which brings out *Parakram* (heroism) inherent in the person. The manifestation of *nishtha* in the supra-conscious level produces involvement in and alertness for the objective, with development of acuteness in planning and implementation. As a consequence, significant progress becomes possible. Analytical considerations indicate that though intellectual capacity of a person also has its own utility, the potency of *shraddha* is supreme. For this reason, *shraddha* and 'life' are considered inseparable from each other. Character of a person is nothing but an introductory reflection of the *shraddha* within his self.

For self-advancement, as well as for various endeavours for seeking communion with God, it is necessary to

cultivate *shraddha* and seek its help. *Shraddha* is absolutely essential for high objectives of self-evolution. While suggesting the most potent means of God realisation and for communion with God within self, the *pundits* of spirituality have emphasised the eminence of *shraddha* itself. The epic "Ramcharit Manas" compares Bhavani and Shankar (two complementary aspects of divinity depicting powers governing the activities of inanimate and animate world) with *shraddha* and *vishvas* respectively, with the help of which communion with God is possible.

Extra-sensory components of human being are far more important than the flesh, blood and bones in his physical body. Man comes into existence as consequence of sentience or emotions (*bhavana*), lives in a world of sentience and ultimately dissipates only in sentience. (Research in spirituality indicates that sentience is carried with soul beyond death). *Shraddha* is only a deference for sentience or emotions. Whenever this attribute of empathy exists man appears fully contented.

God incarnate Shri Krishna states:

"Satvanuroopa sarvasya *shraddha* bhavati Bharata
shraddha Mayoayam Purusho Yo Yachchadra Sa Ev Sah"
 - Geeta 17/3

A higher level of excellence in the inner-self is known as *shraddha*. Its operational facet is *bhakti* (an unwavering surrender to God). In colloquial usage, *shraddha* and *bhakti* are considered synonymous. Nevertheless, there is a subtle difference between the two. In its abstract sense, *shraddha* represents faith of the supra-conscious. It may be described as an inherent instinct of

unending devotion to high ideals. Whereas, in practice, it is seen as *bhakti*. Various human activities inspired by compassion, benevolence, service and percepts of intimacy may be known as *bhakti*. *Bhakti* appears in many forms such as patriotism (*desh bhakti*), belief in ideals (*adarsh bhakti*), faith in God (*Ishwar bhakti*) and provides inspiration for many activities of exemplary idealism, like discardance of selfish interests and sacrifice (*tyag-balidan*) and *tap-sadhana* (spiritual i.e., religious ascetism).

When convictions and aspirations reach a certain level of maturity, motivating a person to persevere for the desired goal, they are known as "*sankalp*" (unwavering determination to reach a goal). The enormous power of *sankalp* is well known. With the strength of *sankalp*, people are known to have achieved miraculous success inspite of limited resources and inopportune circumstances. A high intensity of *sankalp* forcefully channelises the mental faculties and physical activities in the desired direction and surmounting innumerable obstacles, succeeds in taking them to the desired goal which is often initially considered beyond reach. History is full of narrations of stupendous feats of famous women and men. In fact, they had only demonstrated the miraculous power of *sankalp*. In this context, it is also required to be understood that either *sankalp* initially makes its appearance as *vishvas* (firm conviction) in the supra-conscious or it appears independently in the mind irrespective of *vishvas*. Generally, *sankalp* appears only as a consequence of *vishvas* and that is why the convictions of the supra-conscious pertaining to high ideals have been recognised as twin attributes of *shraddha* and *vishvas*. When affiliated to high ideals, *shraddha* and *vishvas* are symbolised as the supra-benevolent pair of Shiva and Parvati (deities).

On the contrary when associated with destructive objectives of degradation, they are seen engaged in evil and cruel activities of devil or *satan* illustrated in ancient legends.

The character and personality of a person is in fact a reflection of his *shraddha*. The chetna of a person resolves into three forces viz. *kriya* (action), *vicharna* (contemplatory process) and *bhavana* (sentience). When applied in the direction of self-advancement, their respective resultants are righteous deeds (*satkarma*), righteous knowledge or wisdom (*satgyan*) and righteous disposition (*sadbhav*). Spirituality (*adhyatm*) is the science of development and effective deployment of these forces. The vast institution of education in spirituality (*Brahmvidya*) is meant only for this purpose. The endeavour for combining *chetna* with self-advancement is known as *yog*. *Sadhana* of *yog* is classified into three main sub-disciplines i.e. *Karmyog*, *Gyanyog* and *Bhaktiyog*. These are three exclusive vehicles for carrying one to the pinnacle of self-advancement. This is the trinity (triveni) conducive to the total self-evolution (realization of the inner-self - the ultimate of progressive evolution of the soul).

With the foregoing deliberations, we come to the conclusion that for success in any aspect of human life, the greatest, the most powerful and the most competent force is *shraddha*. Creativity takes birth in the deep-seated environment of supra-conscious. Whereas physical body of a person comes into existence because of the efforts of parents, his level of excellence is born by the grace of communion of *shraddha* and *vishvas* present in him, which may be regarded as the celestial mother and father of the being. While ascribing destiny or fate to the

will of God, we only metaphorically indicate the implication of the environmental state of supra-conscious of a person playing the decisive role in his progress or degeneration. Basically, "heavenly blessings", "grace of God", or "curse of *satan*" are nothing but boons and banes of one's own supra-conscious. Colloquially, it is said that "man makes his own destiny" Geeta says, "Atmaiva-hyatmano Bandhu-ratmaiva Ripuratmanah" i.e. man himself is his friend or foe. He is the master of the key to his progress or degeneration, which is positively and safely kept in his supra-conscious. This is the master key to self-advancement which *pundits* (scholars) of spirituality have given various names like *astha*, *nishtha*, *shraddha*, *bhakti*, *vishvas* and *sankalp*. This concept has also been elucidated diversely as attributes of sentience (*bhavna*) and aspirations. The happiness of today and brightness of future are totally dependent on righteous *shraddha* i.e. *shraddha* for positive aspects of life. The epic called *Puranas* are historical accounts of ancient events in which the mystic significance, basic philosophy, methodology of development and augmentation of *shraddha* have been unravelled and advocated through the medium of events and lores. This one word *shraddha* encompasses all dimensions of that environment of supra-conscious which is conducive for bringing in happiness in past (memory), present and future.

The seed of *shraddha* gradually develops into the tree of character and personality (self-identity or individuality) of the person. Whatever a person becomes whatever he achieves, is exclusively and in totality a miracle of the power of his *shraddha*. A comprehension of the complex concepts of *Brahm Vigyan* (science of God realisation) which is nothing but *Atm Vigyan*

(science of self-realisation) would indicate that the advocacy of *Vedanta* (a philosophy of spirituality), and eternal truth (*sanatun satya*) by the philosophers of spirituality (*tatvadarshi*) have been expressed variously in the formulae named *Ayamatma Brahm*, *Pragyanam Brahm*, *Tatvamasī*, *Soham*, *Shivoham*, *Succhidanandoham* etc. Suggesting infallible means of protection from degeneration and help in self-advancement, the creators of doctrines of spirituality declare that man himself has to shoulder the responsibility of shaping his own destiny. They advise "*uddhared atmanatmanam-natmana mavsa-dayet*" meaning redeem or uplift your own self-do not let yourself denigrate. They are convinced beyond any doubt that man himself controls the events of his rise and fall. Circumstances are only consequences of his own actions. Choice of goal, efforts and progress are his own endeavours, whereas resources and cooperation are attracted and assembled as a natural consequence of the former processes. In accordance with the choice of goal, whether it is self-advancement or degeneration, commensurate favourable situation with assistance of people, resources and circumstances continues to develop. In view of this magnificence of *shraddha*, the sciences of spirituality have shown reverence to it as an actual extension of power of Almighty present within the human being.

Shraddha is the powerhouse which continues to enlighten the road leading to evolution of soul in search of absolute truth. Whenever one becomes momentarily distracted and begins to lose his orientation because of mundane involvements, sex and wealth, like an affectionate mother, *shraddha* shakes the person to awaken from the slumber. Human intellect is incapable of understanding all dimensions of virtues, magnificence and wisdom

(*gyan*) of absolute truth (*satya*). *Shraddha* develops as an expression of one's humble and affectionate submission to the latter. *Shraddha* continues to guide and guard those attributes of a person which sustain truth.

Only with the help of *shraddha*, the "malin chitta" (polluted sub-conscious in deeper levels beyond voluntary control) is able to struggle and discard the polluted traits again and again and engage in contemplation for communion with God. With it, the intellect (*buddhi*) too dissociates itself from engrossment in mundane objects. With gradual assimilation of divine wisdom (*paramatm gyan*) and after becoming supra-receptive it changes into celestial sentience (*divya bhao*). One does not possess adequate wisdom and the general inherent faculty of discrimination is not sufficiently developed to continuously and convincingly evaluate the factual and far-reaching consequences of proper and improper, necessary and unnecessary actions and their compatibility with evolution of soul. The struggle against indecision is often meaningless. In such a situation, if propriety or impropriety of all actions (mental and physical) are surrendered to the supreme motivator (God), mind feels uniquely relieved. One feels totally relaxed. With God Himself as the navigator, who would have apprehensions and for what? The moment one develops the capacity to commune with the Omnipotent, all fears dissipate. The slightest contact with God gives one enormous strength. His personality and character begins to radiate virtues and celestial attributes. Life appears full of bliss. This relationship and contact, manifests and continues to develop as *shraddha* till communion with absolute truth is achieved. In a way, this interaction with Supreme entity serves as a packet of food required to be carried on a long journey and as such

it is as valuable, as significant, as the objective or the goal itself which is communion with absolute truth or God.

Shraddha may also be seen as appearance of a feeling of intimate personal relationship, a sense of belonging to God. A fully ripened virtuous *shraddha* purifies the supra-conscious without any conscious effort. Imbibition of *shraddha* in life shows a progressive increase in charm in the nature and behavior of the person which continues to be a source of self-contentment to him. *Shraddha* is one of those sweet emotional ingredient of sentience (*bhavna*) which assuredly takes one to the path of name, fame and success. The scholars of science of spirituality proclaim :-

"Bhavani Shankarau Vande Shraddha-Vishwas Roopinau
Yabhayam Vina Na Pashyanti Siddha
Swantasthameeshwaram"

(Ramayan - Bal Kand)

"To begin with let us show reverence to Bhavani (idolisation of the vital force of God regulating non-physical elements of the world like survival, growth and sentience of animate and inanimate life) and to Bhagwan Shankar, the creative and regulative physical powers of God governing the intimate material world, represented by *shraddha* and *vishwas*, without which it is neither possible to control the elements of nature (siddhi) nor fulfil the aspiration of communion with God."

Shraddha comes into existence as a consequence of conjunction of simplicity and piety. The latter are very much required for dissociating oneself from matters relat-

ed to the physical world. Intensity of *shraddha* increases commensurately with simplicity of wants, aspirations and imbibition of piety in love. Simplicity provides sentient perception of the Creator whereas through the medium of pious and selfless love (devoid of desire of reciprocity in any form), His blissfulness (*rasanubhuti*) becomes perceivable. *Shraddha* is a combination of the above two attributes. It includes an emotional perception (*bhavna*) as well as joy (bliss). With the emergence of *shraddha*, most of the obstacles in the way to the ultimate goal are at once surmounted.

In social interaction too, *shraddha* plays a vital role. It is this element of *shraddha* generated by the society itself which serves as the medium for showing proper direction to an aimless (corrupt and polluted) public-life.

In ancient times, it was considered essential to impart the full concept of *shraddha* for maintenance of consistency in spiritual practices (*sadhana*). The situation has not changed today inspite of change in time and socio-economic environment. God is an eternal truth. His characteristics and attributes are not bound by space and time. Because of this very reason, the ways and means for communicating with Him are also not subject to change. A communion with Him is possible even today. It is also possible to feel His presence. However, it necessitates the finale of progressive evolution to a state, in course of which various types of practices (*sadhanas*) are to be performed, adjustments to be made to changes; interruptions in tranquillity to be tolerated and vital decisions to be made. All this is possible only with strong emotional stability for which *shraddha* is absolutely necessary.

This is only a brief introduction of the power of *shraddha* to make one appreciate it as the most competent driving force of human life. *Devlok* (heaven) is on this very earth. This is the land where *devta* (deities) take birth, attain maturity, gain strength and acquire capability for granting boons. They continue to rise and set in the vast infinite horizon of *shraddha*. The entire framework of *mantra*, *devta*, *Guru*, *upasana*, *sadhana* and *siddhi* is erected on the foundation stone of *shraddha*. As a matter of fact, the vast discipline of *sadhana* has been created with exclusive objective of providing a strong force for harnessing and taming the immensely potent Genie of *shraddha-vishwas* for utilitarian purposes. The character and personality of a person are shaped by the *Shraddha* present in the inner-self. With the help of *shraddha* it becomes possible to guide and monitor various types of activities and take them to pinnacles of success. *Shraddha* is the most trusted and close secretary of *atma* (soul). With its help, various celestial achievements, ranging from self-advancement to para-normal achievements and miracles (*riddhi-siddhi*) as well as from self-realisation (*atm-sakchatkar*) to communion with God (*Ishwar-darshan*) become possible. *Shraddha* must be regarded as the most important requirement for self-advancement. Success or failure in *sadhana* depends on this one factor. Hence the *sadhaks* are subjected to a variety of exercises ranging from *Gurudeekcha* (initiation in the doctrine under the direct guidance of a Guru) to *shaktipat* (extra-sensory transfer of spiritual-power by Guru) and are required to go through a variety of known-unknown arduous ascetic exercises along with *sadhana*. Interesting legends are propagated for maximum intensification of *shraddha* and to bring it to the level of maturity to make the *sadhak* worthy of achieving the desired (righteous) objective.

There are eternally confirmed and established principles inculcating and strengthening *shraddha*. The subject for which imbibition of *vishwas* (conviction) - a component of *shraddha* is considered necessary on a permanent basis, should be thoroughly analysed for its authenticity and scientific credibility on the basis of hard facts and logical considerations. Only after a total intellectual conviction beyond any shadow of doubt, one may expect a permanency of *shraddha* and hope for achievement of success in desired fields of operation with greater certainty. Momentary spurts of *shraddha* arising out of hearsay from odd quarters or information collected in a hurried manner, do not have a lasting impact and the *shraddha* generated in this manner, being superficial, is likely to be eroded on the slightest impingement. It keeps on happening now and then. With an impetuous spurt of enthusiasm, one takes up a particular type of *sadhana* recommended by someone. Not long thereafter, some other person points out fallacies of this school of *sadhana* and recommends some other more effective method. As a consequence, doubts creep in mind and the *sadhak* discards the old school for the newer. In this process of change, a doubt continues to lurk in his mind about the correctness and efficacy of the latter method as well and there is also an apprehension whether one would be able to stick to it. Often this process is repeated again and again with people talking about merits and demerits of various schools of spiritual practices. The *sadhak*, therefore, finds it difficult to make the correct choice of school. It is well known that with a mind full of doubts one can not achieve success even in worldly affairs. The field of research in spirituality is totally based and dependent on the power of *shraddha*. In the absence of this basic ingredient, even the routine ritualistic exercises

remain futile. Instead, one continues to be apprehensive about counter-effects because of irregularities of rituals and consequently keep on looking for fallacies in methodology or inadequacies in application of techniques because of which desired results could not be obtained and adverse reactions are apprehended.

As a matter of fact, the significance of performance of rituals in science of spirituality is only one-fourth whereas that of *shraddha* and *vishwas* is three-fourth. Where the intensity of *shraddha* is sufficiently strong, even naivety of rituals produces miraculous results. On the other hand, even meticulously performed rituals under the expert guidance of a priest remain lifeless and ineffective where the aspirant lacks total conviction and his mind is full of doubts.

Hence, it is obligatory for an applicant of *sadhana* to build up a certain amount of maturity in *shraddha* before seeking entrance to the school of *sadhana*.

Shraddha and *Vishwas* go hand in hand. The latter is also known as *nishtha*. Before accepting a doctrine, one should examine it in detail. The authenticity of the doctrine should be examined beforehand on considerations of logic, facts, consultations, examinations etc. and only after a thorough analysis some conclusions may be drawn. The process may take time but one should not lose patience. One should not derive half-baked conclusions in a hurry. On the other hand, there should be an attempt to arrive at firm convictions so that there remains no scope for revisions because of the least misguidance by someone. Generally people are not aware of methodology of rituals (*vidhi vidhan*). They go on confirming the

authenticity of information about the techniques told by some odd person from all and sundry. It is an unfortunate situation for the Bhartiya religion where differences of opinions have assumed large dimensions. Attempting to reconcile these differences, one would find himself entangling in a cobweb of uncertainties and would gain nothing but confusion, depletion of *shraddha* and apprehensions in mind. The *anushtans* performed with such a state of mind hardly produce any result. As an analogy, *shraddha* and *vishwas* are comparable to life; and the religious rituals to body of a being. In absence of the former, the rituals lose their vitality.

Vishwas (conviction) means fastening oneself hard to the accepted doctrine. In *sadhana* it is reflected in regular performance of specified rituals of *upasana* strictly without any laziness or procrastination and with total involvement. When the religious doctrines lay great emphasis on adhering to regulations of *sadhana* and mention about the possibility of failure of *sadhana* because of irregularity of procedures incurring loss and discontentment, the object is only to emphasize this fastness of adherence to specified routines.

Apprehensions about possible harm during the course of *upasana* have been indicated only to educate that desired benefits would not be accrued under some circumstances. Otherwise, while undertaking a virtuous deed, even if some irregularity occurs there is hardly any possibility of harm.

For undertaking *sadhana*, a beginner should make a selection of the ritual according to his physico-mental environment. Once chosen, the routine should be strictly

adhered to without leaving a scope for lethargy and indifference. In absence of strict self-discipline, one begins to lose his hold on *astha* (faith), promptness is reduced and consequent enthusiasm, encouragement and enlightenment also become subdued.

Physical exercises help in increasing the body strength. For augmentation of knowledge, help of a system of education is taken. To acquire more wealth, one chooses an industry or business. For all these activities, it becomes necessary to collect logistics and implements and use them appropriately. In the same manner, development of *shraddha* and *vishwas* is carried out through the medium of idols of deities, places of pilgrimage and other symbols of worship. The *shraddha* consecrated on the above symbols reflects back to the aspirants as fructification of desired goal. An elastic ball thrown by a person against a hard surface bounces back to the person. It is said that in ancient days such missiles were in operation which were guided by the acoustics of the target. After hitting the target, they returned to the operator. Sound waves generated in a domed structure reflect back to the source. If one goes around the earth in a straight line, he is bound to return to the place where he began his journey. The same transpires in the case of *upasana*. *Shraddha* is projected towards the symbols of worship. Being inanimate, these symbols are incapable of reacting but they positively reflect it (*Shraddha*) towards the devotee. With *shraddha*, an idol made of cow dung (say an idol of Ganesh) would be as miraculously effective as the luminous deity in person. The ace archer of *Mahabharat-Eklavya*, had acquired a much greater expertise by learning with the help of mud-statuettes of Guru Dronacharya than what the Pandavas could achieve

under his direct guidance. This is the miracle of the force of *shraddha*. The deities do not reside in material objects like wood or stone idol. It is said, "*Bhavo hi vidyate deva tasmāt bhavo hi karnam*"; i.e. the abode of deity is one's own sentience. Hence the primary reason for the benefits accrued from a pilgrimage lies in the emotive involvement (*bhavna*) of the pilgrim. In absence of *shraddha*, the idol of a deity or any other structure of worship may at the most be regarded as an excellent piece of art or architecture.

In augmentation of *shraddha* and *vishwas* which are abstract attributes of the supra-conscious, a 'living' element also plays a role i.e. *Guru*. In the field of 'self-advancement' the significance of '*Guru dharan*' (embrace of *Guru* for guidance) has always been appreciated and recommended. The verses '*Gurubhrahma Guruvishnu.....* , "*Akhand mandalkaram tasmai shri Guruvai numah* ", "*agyan timirandhasya.....*" etc. sung in praise of *Guru* are indicative of the transcendence of *Guru* and the reverence he deserves (*Guru-bhakti*). At times this noble concept has also been usurped for exploitation of naive persons by people having vested interests and consequently damaging superstitions have become rampant. Nevertheless, there is not the least exaggeration in the truth of statement and emphasis on its acceptability that 'embrace of a *Guru*' results in extraordinary augmentation of the attributes of *shraddha* and strengthening of *vishwas*.

Numerous doctrines are propagated by various schools of spiritual research. These dogmas differ not only in concept but are often mutually contradictory and at times even competitive. In such a complex situation, a

person with an average intelligence finds it difficult to evaluate and choose the correct discipline. Because of doubts, apprehensions and uncertainties in mind it becomes difficult to accept a particular doctrine totally and convincingly. Nor the person finds it possible to follow it with full enthusiasm. The casual, half-heartedly carried out experimental efforts are thus always devoid of vitality. They do not produce any result worth mentioning. Such failures only result in loss of convictions. In course of time, disappointments lead to indifference till the person totally loses interest and discontinues *sadhana*.

In order to avoid such a state of uncertainty, the *sadhak* has to appoint a superior authority of unquestionable authenticity and integrity under subservience of whom proper guidance could be accepted. It is something like discipline in army. The superior officer issues an order which the soldier follows irrespective of known and unknown consequences. The responsibility of propriety or impropriety of the command lies on the shoulders of the officer. The soldier is only required to obey the orders and act promptly. *Sadhana* too, demands an identical discipline. For personal satisfaction one is advised to do as much discussion on utility of some doctrines, debate and investigate all aspects thereof or seek clarification as one finds necessary. Similarly, before choosing and embracing *Guru* for guidance of a particular discipline of *sadhana*, one has the freedom to satisfy himself in respect of former's knowledge, wisdom, experience and character from all possible sources.

However, finally one must reach a state when decisions and directives of some authority (*Guru*) become

acceptable like self-imposed discipline and are complied with full trust and confidence. Once this much has been achieved, the *sadhak* should get assured that the state of uncertainty and indecision has come to an end and it has become possible to reach the desired goal by confident endeavours.

In context of doctrines and programmes, the disciplines imposed by Guru should be considered sacrosanct. Here guidance of one *Guru* is considered adequate. If directives are sought from too many *Gurus*, the multiplicity of their experience and consequent advices would only create uncertainties in the mind of *sadhak*. Hence, only one teacher is required for learning a particular subject. The patient who keeps on consulting too many doctors is prescribed different types of medicines and is given varying advice. The result on the whole is, therefore, a deterioration instead of improvement in his condition. Life is full of a variety of requirements. For each specific requirement, specialist of the subject is needed. For building a house, an engineer, for medical treatment, a doctor and for legal redressal, a lawyer is considered as a *Guru*. Thus, there are experts (*Guru*) in each field of activity. For specialised guidance for self-advancement, the choice of an expert in this very field is all the more and absolutely necessary. In this context, it is to be remembered that particularly in the field of *sadhana*, choice of one *Guru* is more beneficial. According to the accepted principles, in such a case, the onus of responsibility for any inadvertence in misdirection would lie on the *Guru*. While on the other hand, the *sadhak*, irrespective of any irregularity in *sadhana* would positively get true benefit commensurate with his faith and devotion.

Inspiration for *shraddha* comes from tendencies of liking and involvement developed for high ideals, along with an inclination for surrender to these ideals. When such sentiments are cultivated for God, the process is called '*bhakti*'. The devotee is required to develop unusual love for God - so much that like a true lover, the separation becomes unbearable and there appears a constant yearning for surrender. In everyday life, the spouse attempts to develop such emotional involvement with the partner. Poetic illustrations of a moth's attraction and immolation in a flame exemplify the same state of surrender.

Generally, people are unemotional, devoid of attributes of benevolence and are totally indifferent to other's sufferings. Rarely do they have celestial attributes like kindness, compassion, sentience and *shraddha*. They, therefore, find it difficult to imbibe those practices which are alien to their nature. Although many become skillful in ritualistic practices of worship yet their inner self hardly contains any element of *shraddha*. Mechanical repetitions of ritualistic procedures do not serve any purpose. We may compare the rituals of worship with a body devoid of life. The capability to provide this vital force to it, remains inherent in *shraddha* only. Without *shraddha* spiritual practices are akin to an uninteresting puppet show, whereas with *shraddha* they provide the pleasure of real life drama.

Acquisition of *shraddha* through the medium of an idol, symbol or place, though justified in principle, has a major drawback. It is not possible to have a physical interaction with an inanimate object and, therefore, the effort continues to be unilateral. Symbolically, one may

even establish a personal relationship with a tree, but does it respond like a living being? Hence a 'living' symbol is chosen in the form of *Guru* and made interactive (*pranpratisthapna*) by projecting one's own *shraddha* in him. With increase in faith, as a consequence of interaction with the *Guru*, the intensity of celestial empathy in the *sadhak* progressively increases. The interactions are direct, providing for a convenient means of continuous appraisal and appropriate guidance. Where the celestial competence of *Guru* is established, direct benefits of his association are accrued. It provides a momentum to development of spiritual competence with greater convenience and ease.

In spiritual ideology, *Guru* has been assigned the same status as that of the parents. He has been compared with Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (three supreme powers of God governing creation, maintenance and transformation). *Yagyopaveet* (strands of consecrated threads symbolizing Gayatri) is worn across the shoulder as an insignia of *Hindutva* (Hindu ideology). During initiation to Hindu ideology (*yagyopveet sanskar*), this strand of threads is worn for the first time. On this occasion, following established traditions, the *Guru* formally initiates the disciple in *Gayatri mantra*. Just as it is difficult to become educated without the help of a teacher, so it is to imbibe wisdom in the inner-self without the help of *Guru*. Although a casual information may be obtained about the subject by reading or hearing to the wise, for spiritual practice of self-advancement, embracement of *Guru* has been considered as an absolute necessity. It provides a strong foundation for development of the element of *shraddha*. Half the job is believed to be completed with success in selection and appointment of an appropriate deserving person of high integrity as *Guru*.

Just as contact with a learned teacher or an experienced doctor makes one assured of success in education or treatment, the success of *sadhana* becomes decisive with the help of a *Guru*. Even close association with talented persons are known to have brought about extraordinary changes in people having ordinary capacities. *Guru deekcha* (initiation by *guru*), is much more effective and utilitarian, since it involves a systematic scientific process of establishing, a personal bondage of faith and trust. The methodology of religious rituals is easy to learn even with the help of books but problems arise only in course of spiritual practice of self-advancement. On the path of self-advancement, one frequently faces ups and downs. Normal undoctrined intellect is unable to suggest far-sighted solutions to these problems. Consequently, mind gets confused and often arrives at impractical solutions to various problems. In such a situation, some support is found in an arrangement of appropriate and correct advice and doors of convenience to an overall progress in life begin to open. In view of above and similar benefits, the necessity of embracing *Guru* has been advocated. Choosing an appropriate person as a *Guru* and placement of desired degree of trust and faith in him are like seeking a trusted and experienced companion for a difficult journey. In course of this interaction while on one hand the *Guru* finds a subject for bestowing affection, on the other hand, the devotee has the satisfaction of receiving it. This interaction of mutual satisfaction is like that which transpires between a mother and the child feeding on her milk.

Establishment of a bondage of mutual trust and faith between the *Guru* and disciple for achieving a common ideal is bound to produce miraculous and encouraging results.

COMMUNION WITH A SADGURU

(DIVINELY COMPETENT GUIDE)

- A CELESTIAL BOON

The doyens of spiritual literature have written volumes in praise of *Guru*. The spiritually wise have also been advocating the necessity of *Guru* for self-advancement. Access to *Guru* has been considered as the exclusive gateway to personal welfare. Success in *sadhana* has never been considered possible without the help of a *Guru*. In the daily routine of life too, mother, father and *Guru* have been assigned the status of deities and there are traditional directives to remember that the same reverence is due to each of them. The *Sadguru*, whose glory has been sung by the creators of spiritual doctrines is none else than the human supra-conscience (*Antahkuran*) itself. In fact this is the focal source of wisdom constantly guiding the human being in his quest for righteous path and imbibition of excellence in character. It is not possible for an "external" *Guru* to appraise the real state of mind comprehensively. Consequently, his guidance, which is based on partial information, is not sufficiently effective. Besides, an external *Guru* cannot always accompany the disciple, who needs clarifications and solutions of innumerable problems appearing at every step and moment in his life. Which problem is to be solved and how, is the question constantly confronting the *sadhak*. In this context, one cannot rely on any person, however highly qualified he may be. A well-qualified adviser has his own yardstick of advice based on his personal experience which he uses for everyone; whereas for similar problems and circumstances, the type of advice required varies from person to person depending on the mental state of *sadhak*. Is it possible for a human being to appreciate this subtle difference? Only

one's own supra-conscience has the competence to do so, since a person is the best judge of his own internal and external environment.

By constantly suppressing the inherent rational instincts of the supra-conscience and disregarding the voice of the soul, one makes them feeble. The system through which the supra-conscience gives the essential advice and useful illumination to life, becomes weaker. Those who constantly disregard the voice of soul are found becoming victims of misdirection and are inclined to commit misdeeds. Otherwise, in the normal course, the force of instinctive guidance (*Atma-Prerna*) is sufficiently strong and preventive to withhold a man from following a path of degradation. This inherent natural talent of the supra-conscience is in fact the *Sadguru*. *Guru Bhakti* (cultivation of reverence and faith in *Guru*) comprises the process of offering oblations (*Naman-Poojan*) and providing strength to this very *Sadguru*.

Guru-deekcha is the process of imbibition of the following pledge (*Vrut*). "I will always obey the commands of the conscience (*Antaratma*).". The one who strictly follows this dictum never deviates from righteous thinking and duty-consciousness becoming human dignity. The moment evil thoughts emerge in mind, the defensive forces of divinity (*Devatva*) issue a signal of warning for the harmful consequences. This process gives birth to an internal struggle. Where the supra-conscience is active and alert and has not been made unconscious by continuous forced repressions, it rebels against the undesirable contemplatory process and persistently fights the alien evil elements, till they are totally expelled.

While singing hymns in reverence to *Sadguru*, the exponents of spiritual doctrines have compared the former with the trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* (Creative, preservative and transformative powers of God.) *Sadguru* has been given the status of Almighty (*Perbrahm*) who is the bestower of supreme eternal bliss. This similar metaphor would not suit any individual in particular-however qualified he may be. There is no doubt that this metaphorical expression has been exclusively used for a divinely competent supra-conscience. The concept of supremacy of *Guru* over God (Govind) has been advocated to explain that through supra-conscience one can hold communion with God. Only for this *Sadguru* it is possible to remain as a day and night companion-as a constant adviser for righteous action. Only this *Sadguru* has the competence to make appraisal of correct situation and suggest appropriate successive steps for self-advancement. In a nutshell, the foregoing simile of *Sadguru* has only been given to an unpolluted, alert and active supra-conscience, which can offer a stiff resistance to undesirable evil elements and has enormous strength to contain and make totally ineffective those potent forces, which instigate and encourage a person to commit evil deeds.

Notwithstanding the above role of *Sadguru*, there does exist a need for seeking a *Guru* in a particular person. However, the responsibility of latter (*Guru*) is merely to introduce the person to the *Sadguru* and make him his devotee, worshipper and conscientious follower. With this much of achievement the requirement of the human *Guru* is fulfilled. While walking in the dark, legs of the person play the major role whereas the walking-stick merely lends a support. Likewise, *Sadguru* brings in

salvation, whereas the physical *Guru* in human form plays the initial but essential role of his own in making the former available to the devotee i.e. making him aware of his existence. Hence either of them have been considered worthy of reverence in equal measure.

For progress in the field of *Sadhana* in spirituality the support of a *Guru* in a person is absolutely essential. Only the RAM-LAKCHMAN-twin could win the war in Lanka. The war of *Mahabharat* too could reach the desired end because of the combined efforts of Krishna and Arjun.

Any amount of hard labour by a student can not give him higher education without the help of oral or written knowledge, imparted by the teacher. In other significant fields of arts, crafts and science the student needs not only oral, but also practical working education as well, without which he cannot become an specialist in the subject.

The interaction of *Guru* and disciple serves just this purpose. The job does not end by simply whispering some *mantra* in the ears of the disciple and telling him the details of rituals. *Guru* has also to bestow a fraction of his own power (spiritual capabilities), in absence of which, the disciple cannot go far on his path of self-advancement. While climbing uphill, support of a walking stick is needed. To reach the roof, one needs a staircase. This is the type of support which the *Guru* as guide, companion and assistant, provides to the traveller on the road to self-advancement.

The process of development of a child from an

embryo cannot gain momentum unless it is allowed to remain in the womb of the mother, provided flesh and blood by her body and later fed on milk and tended to by her. A child finds itself helpless in obtaining food, clothes and other conveniences on his own and requires the help of guardians. A student, though learning on his own, seeks the support of a guardian for books and school fees and assistance in education from the teacher. Unilaterally, by his own effort he cannot proceed with his education. Parents bring up their children and the latter, on attaining maturity, look after their children. This traditional cycle keeps on repeating. The process of progress in the realm of spirituality too follows the same pattern. The *Guru* hands over the earning of his spiritual gains of ascetic exercises (*tup*) to his disciple, which the disciple does not keep for his own self, but continuing the tradition gives to his student for his (student's) support.

Generally, following the ten doctrines of religion and ten Yog (Yam-Niyum), any one can, without any difficulty achieve the goal of life and in this process there is no relevance of Guru-disciple relationship. (A traveller on a highway, if physically able, can reach the destination by following the milestones.) But one who is also interested in sight-seeing of adjoining places and wants to be benefited by the advantages available at such places, would need some assistant, who is familiar with the area and has some experience of the merchandise available in the area. Although, the journey continues even in absence of such an opportunity, it is reduced to merely a monotonous motion devoid of additional advantages. For one, who on his way to spiritual progress, aspires to acquire relevant celestial benefits in its course and also enjoy the associated bliss and happiness, it would be

necessary to seek the assistance of an experienced companion, *Guru*. Coming together of *Guru* and *disciple* and their joint endeavours fulfill this very requirement.

Books on medical education contain full information on the subject being taught in a medical institution. Nevertheless, to acquire the proficiency of a practising doctor or a surgeon, the student has to receive practical training under an efficient doctor or surgeon. A student cannot perform a surgery merely by studying the procedures and illustrations in the books. He needs a direct demonstration. The same holds true in respect of other fields of engineering, arts, music, warfare, education and science. Besides, this is not relevant only for higher levels of education. Unless directly assisted by a teacher, even students of a primary class cannot learn numerals and alphabets from an illustrated primer. Then how would one expect to be trained unilaterally, exclusively with his own efforts in such an abstract, uncommon and complex subject as self-advancement?

For achieving the high status of Ram Krishna Paramhans, it is obligatory for one to engage himself persistently in difficult *Sadhnas* for several cycles of birth and death. On the other hand, it is easier to attain the status of a Vivekananda in one life-cycle itself (with the help of a *Guru*). The formation of oceans was certainly a much more complex process than formation of clouds today is from the sea-water. Rarely in history a *Samarthaguru* Ramdas is born and very few have had the courage to tread on the razor's edge of the *Sadhana* performed by him. On the other hand, by associating with such a person a child having a nondescript personality could easily develop into a mighty warrior like Shivaji.

A piece of iron cannot become a Parusmani (the mythical stone capable of changing iron into gold). On the other hand it is easier for iron to become gold by coming in contact with former. Every one cannot become a fire-brand like Chanakya but it is easier for son of a maid like Chandragupta to become an emperor with the help of some Chanakya (who was his mentor). Rarely do celebrities of the status of Buddha appear by the will of God, but under their patronage millions of Ashokas, Anands, Angulimals and Amrapalis achieve eminence by discarding their small selfish interests. Superhumans like Gandhi seldom appear in this world, but their followers easily become presidents, prime ministers, national leaders and persons of historical fame.

Fruits of self-advancement are a million times more potent and blissful than anything else known to man in this world. They signify the greatest and the highest degree of success in human life. Whoever could proceed in this direction has had innumerable benefits in all aspects of life.

However, one, who is desirous of taking this path, is essentially required to look for an experienced and dependable *Guru*. In the process he has to be on guard against impostors, who, besides degrading themselves by imitating as a *Guru* also take their gullible followers to degradation. A traveller seeking the right course for self-advancement is also required to be alert, besides having *shraddha* in his *Guru*. Otherwise, in the present corrupt environment he cannot hope for any progress. On the contrary there is every likelihood of his falling a victim to some cunning trickster, and losing whatever he had achieved so far. Success in obtaining direct guidance of

a competent, spiritually elevated and experienced *Guru* should be regarded as a strong support for self-advancement. Besides guiding the disciple in *sadhana*, the *Guru* also obliges the disciple by giving him inner spiritual strength (*Atm - Bul*) from the storehouse of his own earnings of spiritual energy. This spiritual interaction between the *Guru* and the disciple has been metaphorically described in the literature on *sadhana* as "*Shaktipat*"

Literature on *Yog* abounds in descriptions of incidents related to development of capabilities of disciples by the *Guru*, wherein the latter transferred a part of his spiritual power by way of *Shaktipat*. All beginners and *sadhaks* taking their first steps on the path to *Yog* and *sadhana* are inquisitive about the phenomena of *Shaktipat*. He is confronted with a number of queries. What is its mode? How far it is scientific? If there is any truth in the reported incidents of *Shaktipat*, is it possible for anyone and everyone to be benefited by this unusual gift? If it is feasible, then how it is carried out and for whom? In what way a common man can examine this phenomena? These and other related questions need considerations, since all aspirants of *sadhana* are desirous of knowing the answers.

There is a mention in the book "Vivekanand Sanchayan" about the experience of Vivekanand who had felt the transmission of the divine energy form Ram Krishna. The celestial feelings aroused in him during the *Shaktipat* are beyond any description. A similar experience has been mentioned by the author of "Autobiography of a Yogi."

Transfer of spiritual energy by way of *Shaktipat*

between *Guru* and disciple is a traditionally established phenomena, the veracity of which is beyond any doubt. There are umpteen examples of this phenomena mentioned in legends in pages of history and *Puranas*. Unfortunately, in recent times a large number of misconceptions have become associated with this concept, confusing the mind of common man. In the name of *Shaktipat* the so-called impostors of *Guru* have engineered such rackets which are likely to misguide anyone. For this reason, an elucidation of actual mode of *Shaktipat* has become necessary.

As mentioned earlier, for treading on the path of *sadhana* a *Guru* is to be appointed. 'Gu' means darkness and 'Ru' means light. That is to say, the one who carries from darkness to light or enlightenment is *Guru*. There are two *Guru* guiding the being-one residing within the soul (*Antaratma*) providing intuitions and giving inspirations and the other one who is chosen as a person. Both are equally significant. Human mind is capable of perceiving only concepts related to the material world. For this reason, it is incapable of receiving and responding to those inspiratory signals (*Atm Prerna*) of the supra-conscious, which vibrate on extra-sensory, supra-fine (*sookchm*) frequencies. Hence help of a spiritually competent *Guru* is solicited. Thus the *Guru* without (person) also awakens the *Guru* within (soul) of the *sadhak*. With the help of his spiritual energy (*atmbul*) the former charges the disciple with motivations conducive to promotion of virtues. *Guru* plays a very major role in helping the *sadhak* in overcoming the problems and turmoils in course of *Sadhana*. Human existence is equipped with innumerable capabilities. Man can achieve anything in this world. Nevertheless, to take advantage of

his inherent storehouse of power (*Antah Shakti*) he must know the mode of their exploitation (*Atm Both*). Herein comes the role of *Guru*. Not only does the *Guru* introduce the disciple to his (disciple's) dormant powers, he also educates him in every possible means for activating and developing them. The disciple acquires advantage of the spiritual strength and self-confidence which provide him competence to struggle against undesirable elements and help him to get rid of deep-rooted evil instincts.

This gift of *Guru* is received by the disciple as development of *shraddha* within self. But the benefits which he gets by the grace of *Guru* are directly proportional to the degree of *Nishtha* (profound faith and conviction) in high ideals. The grace of competent *Guru* is bestowed only in this manner, by virtue of which the disciple becomes more and more competent day by day along with progressive upgradation of virtuous traits in character. This is in short the philosophy of *Shaktipat*. *Shaktipat* necessitates time as well as resources, which the *sadhak* acquires from his *Guru* by way of *Sadhana* associated with profound *Sharaddha*. The process of *Shaktipat* is not completed in a "jiffy" to obtain miraculous powers in a flash. On the contrary it is a prolonged process of *sadhana*, with the help of which the disciple develops his power of competence.

This is the way in which *Shaktipat* is bestowed by the *Sadguru*. There are other less known methods as well for development of character and spiritual strength of a disciple. These methods, are, however, not available to the common man. Besides, they are hazardous to an undeserving disciple. Only a rare individual gets benefited from the latter process. Those who have developed

their capacity and merit (*patrata*) sufficiently enough to sustain and retain the high intensity of this charge of spiritual energy (*Shakti*), are blessed with celestial rewards from the Almighty. The process is, however, highly specialized and not for a common man. Not much is known of the manner in which Vivekanand and Yoganand underwent *Shaktipat*. Beside, their celestial experiences are beyond description. Nevertheless, everyone is familiar with the outcome of grace of their *Guru* on them and the consequent changes in their life. *Shaktipat* brought in phenomenal changes in their lives. Dissociating themselves from the then prevalent life-style of the masses, they chose their own paths of actions full of hazards and uncertainties. Voluntarily and happily, they embraced struggles for promotion of ideals, as a consequence of which, their social stature was elevated to such lofty heights that they became embodiments of enlightenment and inspiration for the entire humanity. The personality of Ramakrishna Paramhans was seen reflected in his disciple Vivekanand. What did the latter feel during the *Shaktipat*? What did he visualize? These and other such questions are irrelevant to the issue. Consequences of *Shaktipat* are more important. The true achievements by the grace of *Guru* appear only as an upgradation of character and a total development of personality. Intensity of manifestation of these attributes in disciple is indicative of the amount of spiritual charge bestowed by the *Guru*.

The process is, however, not unilateral. It is essentially mutual interaction. While on one hand the *Guru* showers his blessings on the disciple, the latter endeavours to intensify his (disciple's) *shraddha*. *Shraddha* results in development of *Nishtha* in-high ideals.

COMMUNION WITH ABSOLUTE WISDOM - ITS PHILOSOPHY AND EFFICACY

The mental capacity inherent in a human being is divisible into two components. One is the wisdom or intellect (*buddhi*) which caters to the needs of the body and accordingly formulates plans of contemplation (*chintun*), endeavour and behavior; the other remains engaged and derives pleasure in matters related to disciplines imposed by spirituality. It is the latter component which needs ideals to uplift the lowly to the loftiest pedestal and bestows courage for endeavours for the highest level of achievements. This attribute of mind is known as "*Pragya*". Whereas intellect or wisdom (*buddhi*) lends support to collection of wealth-the devil of the material world, (which is paradoxically, the root cause of all unhappiness in this world), "*Pragya*" promotes the angelic traits of virtues and is forever engaged in sweet aspirations of imbibing celestial attributes. The limits of accomplishments of intellect end with accumulation of wealth & resources. It does not transgress the boundaries of earthly desires and greed. The realm of "*Pragya*" on the other hand, covers wider horizons of celestial acquisitions. These acquisitions encompass the bliss associated with the endeavours for high ideals as well as attainments of para-normal capabilities required for furtherance of activities of human welfare.

The cosmos (*Brahmand*) is impregnated with an omnipresent extrasensory element called "*Akash*". Only an infinitesimally small fraction of it is found permeated in the "*Pind*" (being) or the bodies of the living beings, which is known as "*Pind Akash*". In parlance of spirituality, the extensive component is known as "*Mathakash*", whereas the part confined in the body is called "*Ghata-*

kash". *Pragya* fills an individual's life with zeal. Since it dwells only in excellence it is known as "*Ritam bhara*". *Mahapragya* is permeating the entire universe. Exuberance of its grace descending on living beings (mankind) is seen in the form of farsightedness, wisdom, power of discrimination, adherence to justice, compassion and benevolence; whereas in the inanimate world, it is found operative in providing life, system and beauty in objects. *Mahapragya* is the component of *Parabrahm* (Almighty) relating exclusively to helping mankind in its progress and welfare. The animate and inanimate components of this world are benefitted by the grace of God in innumerable ways, but the foundation for elevation of human being to pinnacles of progress which provides him the opportunities for reaching the ultimate goal (evolution of soul), is provided exclusively by *Mahapragya*. Whoever succeeds in acquiring whatever fraction of *Mahapragya* by any means, achieves his objective in proportion to acquisition of this attribute. The appearance of divinity i.e. celestial capabilities in man, depends only on the intensity of imbibition of *Mahapragya* by him.

In context of spirituality, *Mahapragya* is known as *Gayatri*. It has two facets. One relates to its philosophy and the other to human behaviour. The basic philosophy of *Gayatri* is nothing but spirituality. "Dharm" is in fact synonymous with civilized behaviour. The inner-self of a being is the domain of *Gayatri*, whereas his actions in the material world are governed by *Savitri*. Both *Gayatri* and *Savitri* are names given to the same celestial existence, the difference having been made to identify their applications and processes. Consider this analogy. A person may be known as a wrestler as well as a preacher, depending upon the act he is performing at the moment. In spite of

his two names by virtue of varying activities, he continues to be the same person. In the same manner, *Mahapragya* is seen operating in two independent streams. On one hand it plays a role in matters related to devotion (*sharaddha* and *bhakti*) whereas on the other, it operates in the activities of welfare for the mankind. It is like operations of electricity which produces heat in a heater and ice in a refrigerator. *Gayatri* or *Mahapragya* manifests itself as a celestial attribute in the inner-self and as prosperity in the material world. In spiritual parlance these achievements are known as *Riddhi* and *Siddhi* respectively.

Broadly speaking, *Gayatri* is a twenty-four letter combination of *sanskrit* verses, a *Mantra*, which is generally used during religious rituals or for *japs* (cyclic recitations with the help of a rosary). This is, however, a very insignificant aspect of utility of the super power inherent in *Gayatri*. As a matter of fact, it cannot be bound in dimensions. *Samagra Chetna* (absolute conscious force) is known as a *Virat Brahm* or *Pragya Purush*. His omnipotent celestial competence of bestowing grace as "*Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram*" is known as *Mahapragya-Ritambhara* and *Gayatri*. With its imbibition, man progressively evolves to become *Mahamanav*, *Siddha Purush*, *Rishi* and *Devadoot* (Superman, man with paranormal capabilities), saint, messenger of God and finally attains communion with God. (That is, in its final state of evolution, the soul (which is a part of omnipresent God) merges with the Supreme Being). This final state of evolution of the soul is known as *Swarg* (entry into heaven) in the physical sense and *Mukti* (the ultimate absolution) of the inner self in metaphysical connotation.

Whereas *Mahapragya* produces innumerable types of capabilities, *Gayatri* is described as *Tripada* (three faceted). In the realm of spirituality, tripartite classifications of attributes have been frequently used. The three facets of *Gayatri* are called *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*. Metaphorically, they have been likened to the confluence of the three holy rivers, *Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati*. These three attributes have also been personified as the three supreme male deities namely *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Mahesh* or as the three female deities *Saraswati*, *Lakshmi* and *Kali*. The philosophers name this trinity as *sat*, *raj* and *tam* and believe them to be the root cause of the creation. *Gayatri* is known as *Vedmata* (creator of Vedas), *Devmata* (creator of virtues), and *vishwamata* (creator of universe). *Ved* means celestial wisdom (*divya gyan*). *Vedmata* thus becomes the presiding deity of celestial wisdom. *Dev* (angelic) is one who is pious and gifted. *Devmata*, therefore, implies that one who comes in contact with her becomes angel-like. *Vishnu* means omnipresent (*Virat*). Thus as *Vishwamata*, *Gayatri* unifies the diverse elements of cosmos in a system i.e. coordinates the diversity of nature. With it the concept *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam* (entire world is my family), becomes universally expansive to make the feeling of belonging encompassing all living beings (flora and fauna). In this way, man is provided an opportunity to amalgamate in the above trinity his total conscience including faith, contemplative capacity (*Vicharana*) and traits (*Pravatti*) which brings about a complete transmutation in his personality and character (*Kaya-Kalp*).

For acquisition of these three celestial gifts of God, the elaborate structure of *sadhana* encompassing disciplines of *Bhakti Yog*, *Gyan Yog* and *Karm Yog* have been

created. They provide the basis for purifying the three shells of human existence, namely the physical body (*sthool Sharir*) and astral bodies, (*sukchma* and *karan sharir*).

The conceptual aspect (*Bhav Pakcha*) of the divine culture (*Deva Sanskriti*) is called divine knowledge (*Brahm Vidya*). Detailed analysis of "*Brahm Vidya*" are found in ancient scriptures (expressions of ancient sages). The spiritually-wise refer to only this science. The galaxy of spiritual analytical literature namely the *Vedas*, *Upnishads*, *Darshan*, *Aranyak*, *Brahman*, *Sutra*, *Puran* et. may be considered interpretative and deliberative of *Brahm Vidya* itself. This plethora of literature throws light on various facets of *Mahapragya Gayatri* itself. From the beginning of the creation of this universe, the power of the supreme Being is believed to have manifested in this world as twenty-four incarnations (messenger of God). This is a metaphorical expression of revelation of secrets imbibed in each of the twenty-four letters of *Gayatri*. The present analysis, which is being made keeping in view the physical and spiritual configuration of human entity and its requirements, may also be treated as an extensive spiritual treatise expounding "*Brahm Vidya*". In a few words, all the above aspects related to human existence may be viewed as the philosophy of *Gayatri*. The concepts being described here are totally and comprehensively inclusive of all requirements considered desirable and essential for one venturing on the path of self-advancement.

Gyan (wisdom) and *karma* (action) are twin attributes. Only coordination of principles and practice make it possible to understand sanctity of an ideology

and its imbibition in nature and behaviour. The other side of *gyan* is *Vigyan* (science). To be of any useful consequence, both must proceed hand in hand. For producing current the flow of negative and positive ions of electricity must meet and interact. One of the aspects of *Mahapragya*, the *Brahamavidya*, fills the inner-self-with the bliss of faith in high ideals. The other aspect is *sadhana* which may be viewed as *Vigyan* or enterprise (*parakrum*), which acts as a catalyst in stimulation and concentration of faith. *Gyan*, by itself does not produce any result. With the help of action it is required to be imbibed in nature and behaviour and made a trait (*sanskara*). The objective of *sadhana* is to translate *sharaddha* (devotion) - into *nishtha* (determination) and directives into practice. For this reason even the sages maintain a regular daily routine of *sadhana*.

The process of associating contemplation (*chintan*) with excellence is accomplished by *Yog*, while that of dissociating habits from vices and forcefully ushering them into the field of excellence is achieved with the help of devout austerity (*tup*). Thus *yog* and *tup* are the minimum requirements for getting rid of the deeply imbibed irregularities of traits. Convictions and habits are generally deep-rooted and tend to be obstinate. Although not justifiable on considerations of logic or propriety, they are difficult to change. It does not serve any purpose when an errant sometimes concedes to the force of arguments in favour of propriety in principle only, unless the change in convictions is found reflected in change of his nature and behaviour as well. Had transformation of mass-thinking and behaviour been possible merely by presentation of logic and evidences, the prevalent means of education by literature on spirituality and interactions

with the learned people would itself had changed the world drastically. Had it been so, the written and spoken words would have reversed the state of chaos and disorder in human society long ago. But the situation is quite contrary. The inner-self of a person adopts certain convictions and traits of behaviour which are reflected outwardly in his character, nature and behaviour. Any amount of persuasion does not suffice to make a change in the state of the inner-self. Those who beat drums and blow trumpets of goodwill are paradoxically seen engaged in destructive activities. There is only one reason behind this paradoxical behaviour. For changing the deeply ingrained tenacious traits in the inner-self and for alteration of confirmed habits generally, enough force is not applied. In a metallurgical process in order to melt the raw material and later to mould the useful product in the desired shape, a high temperature furnace is needed. Is refining of impure metals possible without exposing them to an appropriate temperature? For extricating the inner-self from the quagmire of tenacious traits, on to the firm ground of excellence, nothing short of imbibition of a habit of *sadhana* comprising *yog* and *tup* in the daily routine is workable.

The process of moral regression does not require any effort. The strong gravitational force of earth is ever present at all places to pull anything downwards. Spilled water instantaneously flows down the slope. On the other hand, for raising it additional equipment is needed and arrangements are required for forcing and carrying it upwards. In absence of these arrangements, upliftment, upraising or upward projections continue to be concepts only. Reading and hearing of scriptures, performance of religious rituals etc. have their own significance and also

provide limited benefits of their own. Nevertheless, where the objective is to dissociate the internal and external facets, of inner-self and physical behaviour from evil influence and to achieve a total metamorphosis by incorporation of excellence in them it is absolutely essential to take the support of the energy of *sadhana*. The two-fold *sadhana* of *yog* and *tup* is meant only for this purpose. With *yog* it becomes possible to control the thought-process (*vicharna*) whereas *tup* makes it possible to keep the habits under harness.

Sadhana of *Mahapragya* necessitates many types of purifying activities, religious rituals and regulations. Notwithstanding the basic requirements, procedures of *sadhana* prescribed to a devotee differ from person to person depending on his mental and physical environment. For rectification of contemplation (*chintun*), the base (evil) instincts ingrained therein are confronted with equally strong virtuous traits (*Deva Pravritti*). Under *yog sadhana*, arrangements conducive to fulfillment of the basic objective of eradication of the deep-rooted convictions of the undesirable dogmas and superimposition on them of virtuous thoughts and actions are made. *Yog* helps the *sadhak* in two ways. On one hand, it provides strength to resist and finally defeat the forces of degeneration; whereas on the other hand, concomitantly, it establishes a close bond with elements of excellence. That is to say, the job is not completed merely by getting rid of the lowly non-virtuous traits, but at the same time efforts to fill in the void by augmentation of elements of excellence have also to be made.

It is not sufficient just to cure the disease. After treatment convalescence is equally important and for the

latter too, effort is required for exercise, nutritious food and appropriate climate. Imbibition of *yog* comprises a total comprehension and deep penetration within the psyche of those ideologies which are absolutely essential for communion of soul with the Supreme Being.

The process of *yog* induces a reversal in the direction of thinking and strongly stimulates the mind for self-analysis. It generates an environment in the inner-self full of devotion (*sharaddha*), courage, enthusiasm and exuberance, which is pre-requisite for neutralization of the evil traits and thereafter remoulding of the thought-process for positive thinking. In the complimentary process of *tapascharya* though the objective remains the same, the field of operations relates to human body. Activities of body always remain under the control of habits and traits. The sensory organs keep on demanding luxury and comforts. Mind is overpowered by cravings and a sense of belonging i.e. attachment to "my" and "mine". Mind takes pleasure in dwelling on subjects related to greed, attachment and pride. The body yearns for a variety of pleasures created either directly or indirectly by the sense organs. The basic objective of *tup* is to instigate a revolt against all such yearnings and attachments and resist and discard the deep rooted old habits and traits.

The realm of *yog* encompasses *svadhyay* (study and contemplations on spiritual literature), *satsang* (interaction with the spiritually-wise), *manun-jap* (contemplations on self-analysis and reform), *dhyān* (meditation), *pranayam* (specified procedure of inhalations and exhalations through either nostrils alternatively), *mudra* (postures of *yog*), *bandh*, *niad*, *lai* and so many other techniques. *Tup*

comprises activities like partaking tasteless food without salt, sugar and spices (*aswad vrit*), *brahmacharya* (refraining from sex), self-service for body needs, sleeping on floor, developing tolerance to changes in weather, maintenance of silence etc. The objective is to make the body feel that it is being accustomed to voluntary exposure to discomforts of weather and food and tolerance for self-advancement known as *titiksha*.

A significant medium that helps in imbibition of the process of giving up vices and taking up virtues during self-purification and self-advancement is the discipline of penance (*prayaschchitya*) which means voluntary disclosure and acceptance of responsibility for the misdeeds and taking corrective measures. Each event of a misdeed committed by a person leaves a dark harmful imprint on his inner-self. In course of time, all misdeeds, including the recent ones form layers of a thick envelope—a cocoon around the soul and become ingrained as evil instincts or regressive traits (*kusanskar*). Reactions of latter prove to be a greatest hindrance in the efforts of self-advancement and in a variety of ways create such circumstances which do not permit the person to extricate from the cobweb of adverse reactions of misdeeds, thereby denying him the opportunity of progress. During the course of *sadhana* these obstacles appear as occasional spurts like boredom, disinterest in *sadhana*, indisposition and apparent adverseness of circumstances. They do not permit creation of environment conducive to protection of self from the consequences of past misdeeds. The new traits of virtues created in the initial stages of *sadhana*, unless strengthened persistently over a prolonged period, are nullified by the predominating evil traits. It is difficult to dye a dirty cloth or cultivate a

rocky piece of land. Commissions of misdeeds over long periods distort the mental faculties to so great an extent, that in the initial stages the spiritual practices (*sadhana*) do not appear to create any impact and all efforts appear to be futile exercises.

For overcoming this obstacle, the scientists of spirituality have considered confessions and willful corrective measures of previously committed misdeeds as essential ingredients of *sadhana*. This is known as *bhoomi shodhan* (preparing the ground). In course of *kaya-kulp* (a type of spiritual-treatment), the patient is first subjected to *nadi shodhan*. Similarly, an aspirant for self-advancement is, to begin with, undertake *prayashchit*. In other words, we may say that *prayashchit* is the process of penance under which, one undergoes a self-inflicted punishment for his misdeeds, even before he is punished by God or Society. In this way he removes the wild growth of evil traits deeply rooted in his mental field to make it cultivable for virtues.

In order to make amends for the harm inflicted on others and to the society voluntarily or involuntarily, it becomes obligatory for a person to augment the noble traits and utilize a part of time and resources for social welfare. The process of *prayashchit* involves a voluntary acceptance of physical, mental and financial hardships for self, through specified procedures of *tup* and *titiksha*. It involves a detailed confession before the guide (*Guru*) of all physical misdeeds and sinful thoughts remembered at the moment. The process is known as *nishkashan tup* (penance for expulsion). Acceptance of guilt and its confession creates an instant feeling of relief in mind. *Prayashchit* involves fourfold actions (1) repentance for

past misdeeds (2) taking a pledge to desist from repetition of the same (3) undergoing a punishment in the form of *tup titikcha* for the misdeeds and (4) engagement in social-welfare captivities for making amends. These four activities complete the process of *prayashchit*. However, decision on them is not to be taken unilaterally. *Prayashchit* requires the guidance of a trusted, experienced, large-hearted and learned person of specific superhuman status who is known to have the capacity of psychosomatic treatment. In this context, a variety of pledges (*vrut*), fasting (*upwas*), pilgrimages, acquisition of spiritual energy from places of pilgrimage, known as (*teerth-sevan*) giving of alms and doing virtuous acts, (*dan-punya*) are required to be undertaken which involve hardships. A mind relaxed through *prayashschit* becomes well amenable for *sadhana*, which then produces desired results.

The endeavour needed for analysis and advancement of the inner-self is in fact an obeisance to *Mahapragya* (deity of supreme wisdom). In other words it is nothing else than *Gayatri Upasana* (interaction or communion with *Gayatri*). The universe is densely impregnated with *Mahapran* (vital divine force pervading the cosmos). It is required to be drawn in by the devotee in self, in desired quantity. It is possible to do so by following the methodology of the celestial process of *Gayatri Upasana* prescribed by experienced ascetics. The process comprises a combination of three systems, namely *Jup*, *dhyān* and *pranayam*. However, which of these system is needed, for which objective it is required and what should be the order and qualification, is decided by an experienced guide (*Guru*) after careful assessment of the state of mind of the devotee (*sadhak*). There are, however, some rituals, common to all and sundry, which are to be

followed in daily routine. The everyday routine of *sadhana* is meant for resisting the every day incursion of evil traits and to mitigate the influence of the environment created by these traits. Just as one regularly follows the routine of daily bath, washing clothes, brushing teeth and cleaning the apartment etc., daily activities of worship (*upasana*) are required to be adopted to keep the mind free of accumulations of evil influences. Specific disciplines of *sadhana* are additional inputs to this routine. It is this latter aspect which needs special attention for self-advancement.

There are a variety of methods for performing *Gayatri jup*. At times, some *Beej Akchars* (pre-fixes or suffixes) are also required to be added to the basic *mantra*. In course of meditation, the three *chakras* (nuclei of energy) act as source for three types of energy transmissions. These are situated near the navel (*nabhi-chakra*), near heart (*hriday chakra*) and in between the eyebrows in the forehead (*agya chakra*). The nabhi chakra is a store house of the vital force which is also known as the *Kundalini*. In *hridya-chakra* is the storage of devotion (*bhakti*) which helps in communion of the devotee with the Super Being. It is also the source of continuous motivation. From *agya chakra*, emanates a flow of celestial wisdom, para-normal capabilities, far-sightedness, prudence and a capacity to see events in time and space beyond normal human capacity (*divya drishti*). Activation of elements present in this *chakra* enables the person to grant boons or make a curse effective. Three faceted *Gayatri* comprises the aforementioned trinity of celestial streams and for this reason it is known as *triveni* (the tri-junction). A variety of procedures for meditation are prescribed alongwith *jup* in course of

which the *chakras* are activated. This process is known as *granthi bhed*. The three obstacles interfering in communion of the *sadhak* with the super Being are surmounted by energising and activating these three *chakras* with the help of meditational energy.

We shall now discuss the various techniques of meditation. Mediation in which a luminous medium is used is called "*bindu yog*". "*Nad Yog*" is the technique of meditation in which the extra-sensory auditory capacity is developed to sense celestial sound waves. The third technique of meditation is "*Lai Yog*" in which an endeavour is made to achieve the feeling of oneness with God with a total emotional involvement and ecstasy. It is known as *Samadhi Sadhana*. It is associated with *Khechari mudra* (a yogic posture involving tongue) assumed for activation of *sahasrar* (energy transmissions in the nuclei in the cranium). *Shambhavi mudra* (yogic posture) activates the *Mooladhar* (energy centre at the base of vertebral column near the anus). For activating the *hriday chakra* one meditates on *Joyti mudra* i.e. *amrit kalash*. The above treatments constitute components of *Gayatri Upasana* and are prescribed after diagnosing whether the state of mind of *Sadhak* is predominated by *satogun*, *rajogun* or *tamogun*. (a broad three-fold classification of human beings in different stages of evolution of the inner-self). Although the daily routine of *sadhana* being followed is more or less same for all *sadhaks* with only minor differences here and there, the specialized *sadhanas* are comparable to training given to a gymnast in a gymnasium, under expert guidance (only this level of training helps one to enter an olympic). Mere routine rituals do not provide this degree of expertise.

Every living entity consists of three bodies the physical (*sthool*) and astral (*sookchma* and *karan*). Purification of these three bodies necessitates *sadhana*s of *Hathyog*, *Rajyog*, and *Laiyog*. Amongst these three types of *yog* there are many sub-routines, permutations and combinations. Like medical science, the science of *sadhana* is an *independent* discipline. In course of medical treatment it becomes necessary to keep track of the progress of patient. In the same manner for an aspirant seeking pinnacles of success, experienced guides prescribe that technique of *sadhana* or combinations of *yog*, which are helpful in catering to his need and provide solutions to his problems. A trinity of spiritual currents known as *ida*, *pingla* and *sushumna* flows through the vertebral column of the human beings. The guide (*Guru*) takes decisions to prescribe the type of current and the component-body which needs it. This phenomena has been metaphorically referred to as the three highways (*Rajmarg*) of access to the three worlds (*lok*). In this way the *bhuh-lok* is related to *ida*, *bhuwah lok* to *pingla* and *swah lok* to *sushumna*. In totality, these three represent *Gayatri*.

In invocation of *Gayatri*, *mantra* plays the dominant role. It involves the process of interaction with the three sources of power inherent in the three body-components of the being through the medium of word-power. According to spiritual concept, the cosmos is divisible into three regimes (*lok*). It is possible to have an access to these regimes with the help of word power. All treatments of *mantra yog* are dependent on word power. It is well known to a student of science that amongst various known types of energy, heat, sound and light, sound waves have been considered as significant. These are

continuously under a process of transformation into varying atomic configurations and systems composed of biological cells. The inanimate (*padarth*) component of cosmos is governed by five basic elements, whereas its animate (*chetan*) counterpart is under the control of five vital forces (Pran.).

However, amongst various forms of energy which govern the activities of both animate and inanimate worlds, "sound" is most significant. The scholars of spiritual science make an endeavour to receive it as "*Omkar*" (OM). From Omkar emerge the three *vyahritis*, *bhuh*, *bhuvah* and *swaha*, each of which successively subdivides into twenty-four syllables to constitute the super *mantra*, *Gayatri*. Generally, in course of meditation, *Gayatri* is visualized and understood as the primordial power (*adi-Shakti*) personified as a deity seated on a swan; or as *Bhurg* of *Savita* in *Brahmvarchas*; or as Absolute Wisdom (*Mahapragya*). Nevertheless, it is to be kept in mind that the basic philosophy (*tatva gyan*) and technique of applications of *Gayatri* are controlled by that branch of science of spirituality (*Brahma Vidhya*) which is based on sound waves (*Shabda*). This is the secret of *mantra yog*. The entire theory and practice of this *yog* can be explained in terms of the science of acoustics.

Sound (*shabda*) is the force acting as an intermediary bond between the animate (*chetan*) and the inanimate (*jud*). The effect of sound on matter is immediately visible. The force of sound is eternally being reflected in its reverberations and incessant propagation. Generation of sound on knocking on an object indicates, that the kinetic energy within the material tends to communicate within an extensive area and is related to sound. Similarly,

acoustics is an infallible means for knowing the internal and external kinetics of human being. The sound of circulation of blood in the arteries and heart-beat is indicative of the state of health of an individual. Likewise the sound of ordinary activities such as locomotion, change of postures during sleep and respiration too indicates the physical state of the person. As is being attempted with light waves, the activities all over the cosmos can also be monitored with the help of sound signals. In fact this is the only medium to examine the environment of the inner-self. Speech is nothing but a manifestation of sound waves, used by all living beings for communication of their emotional state of mind. The human beings have developed a high level of efficiency and expertise in the skill of communication through speech.

During *sadhana* an interaction between the inner-self of the *sadhak* and the Super being is attempted exclusively with the help of *shabda shakti* (the power of sound). Various rituals of *sadhana* like *Jup*, *stawan* (invocation by prayer), *katha* (narrations of fables), *mantropchar* (invocation by recitation of *mantra*), *path* (reading of scriptures), *pravachan* (addressing by a priest), *keertun* (mass chanting of prayers) *asheerwad* (bestowing blessing), *abhichar* (treatment by *mantra*) etc. use *shabda* (sound) in one way or the other. *Nadyog* serves as a medium for receiving signals from the divinity and for knowing the activities of the extra-sensory world. Spiritual science has found such sound waves inherent in nature which are more powerful than any other source of energy discovered so far. The specialized appropriation and application of *shabda-shakti* (word power) for infusing a high level of efficiency in the animate and the inanimate world (*chetan Jagat* and *Padarth*

Jagat) and thereby achieving the desired objectives from them is known as *mantra*. The present civilization is dependent on numerous varieties of implements and instruments. Their utility and effectiveness is well known. In ancient times (in India), the *mantra shakti* (power of *mantra*) was used for the same purpose with a proven efficiency no less than the gadgets of present day.

We may call the *mantra vidya* (science of *mantra*) as a specialised discipline of *shabda vigyan* (science of phonetics). While structuring a *mantra* experts of the science of self-development (*Atm Vigyan*) make arrayal of words and syllables in such a manner that they progressively activate and augment the many unknown nuclei of dormant energy inherent in the body of the *sadhak*.

The *Gayatri Mahavidya* (super-science of *Gayatri*) holds a key to the mysterious super-power, an understanding and application of which impart to one the status of *Siddha Purush* (super man) capable of performing para-normal feats. Fuel is an essential requirement for running even the most costly instruments. In order to be productive a coordination of fuel and the machine is necessary. Let us consider the human body-system. Apart from the extraordinary structure of its internal organs, members, living cells and harmones, it is also equipped with complex mysterious electrical charges having no parallel in the world in their subtlety and efficacy. This ingenious contrivance has been devised by the omnipotent God. While structuring the human body, the creator has surpassed the limits of excellence. He has even hidden seeds of HIS own power and competence in this unique storehouse of human being in several

places in the body. The normal functions of human body are performed with the help of food, water and air. But when the secret, dormant powers of human body are needed for some particular person, for a specific objective, or for making a rearrangement in the extra-sensory environmental configuration of the world; an interaction with the cosmic powers is required. For this purpose an entirely different kind of fuel is needed. It is well known that an ordinary oil engine can be operated with cheap crude oil, whereas for an aircraft high octane aviation fuel is needed. A human being aspiring to do a higher level of endeavour for bringing in specific changes in the extra-sensory world, needs an additional source of energy. This is possible only with the help of *shabda shakti* which is sought after by noble persons for the welfare of mankind.

The energy produced by *mantra vidya* (scientific application of *mantra*) from the medium of *shabda shakti* is stupendous and it produces miraculous results. Legends of boons and banes throughout the course of history of ancient India prove the veracity of this statement. With the help of *mantra-sadhana*, it is possible to achieve extraordinary progress in worldly and metaphysical facets of life. Besides, it is also possible to serve the interests of others with its help. It provides a basis to unravel the mysteries of destiny and makes it possible to bring about desired adjustments in the invisible extra-sensory environment guiding the course of events taking place in the world. The science of *mantra* has always been given due recognition in all the countries of the world and by all religions in some form or the other.

In this context not few attempts were made by the confidence tricksters to fleece the gullible and enough damage was done by spreading misinformation. This

however, did not belittle the efficacy of *mantra* and *richas* of *Vedas*, *Kuran*, *Bible*, *Zinddbasta* and other scriptures continue to be utilized for wisdom as well as for higher spiritual science.

The *Gayatri Mantra* is an array of words. Its application through the medium of *Jup* and enunciation is only for some limited objectives. *Gayatri Vidya* (*the science of Gayatri*), on the other hand, is a comprehensive science. In the realm of spiritual sciences it is unique and has no parallel. *Gayatri* is also known as *Brahmavarchas*. *Brahm* means *Brahmvidya* i.e., *Atm Vigyan* (science of self-advancement) or *Tatva Darshan* (philosophy of basic elements). *Varchas* stands for internal *Ojas-Tejas* (brilliance and enlightenment of the inner self), the external manifestation of which is talents, as in a genius. It also reflects in extraordinary development of competence and achievement of a significant position in the society. In a few words, we may appreciate the discipline of *Gayatri* as faith in high ideals, a sense of universal empathy and courageous endeavour to work for great objectives for the welfare of mankind. These are the celestial attributes with the help of which, man continues to ascend higher and higher peaks of excellence with the support of his inner strength, in spite of apparent ordinary capabilities and unfavourable circumstances.

All types of para-normal achievements feasible through various techniques of *sadhana* are possible exclusively with the support of *Gayatri Vidya*. The elements of wisdom (*Tatva Gyan*) and the techniques (*Vidhi-Vidhan*) of this super science are of immense significance for mankind. In order to understand these tenets and derive maximum benefits from them one is advised to probe as deeply in it, as possible

BASIC TENETS OF SPIRITUAL TREATMENTS

Inner strength of man is the most powerful source of energy in this world. Whereas material resources of the world and physical competence of man have the limitations of providing only means of livelihood and comforts, the inner strength activates the dormant *Chetna* (energy of supra conscience), develops the inherent para-normal capabilities and sprouting the seeds of divinity within man develops him into a super being. Inner-strength of man is in fact the catalyst which transforms his animal existence with its incessant involvement in eating, comfort and sex into a *Mahamanav* (superman, leader, social reformer etc.), *Rishi* (saint) and *devdoot* (messenger of God). The ordinary intellect in a person, has only a limited capacity to benefit his own self besides a few others. With the help of inner-strength, on the other hand, one can develop such talents for self-advancement, which provide means for upliftment of not only self but of millions others in the society. Compared to material resources of the world, celestial attributes of the inner-self are as superior as the vital force (life) is to body. Whereas prosperous persons derive pleasure only in the physical comforts of the world, a person having the competence of inner strength enjoys heavenly bliss of *mukti* (salvation) and achieves the ultimate goal of human soul in its communion with God.

There are two facets of *sadhana* required for developing the inner strength. One comprises the ritualistic treatment involving worship, prayers and oblations. The other consists of *yog*-establishment of close affinity with absolute perfection of the Super Being and HIS cosmic *chetna* (omnipresent energy of God in the cosmos).

The treatments consist of bodily activities like *Jup*, *bhajan* (prayers), *Vrut* (special pledges) and *upwas* (fasts or partaking specified or tasteless food). *Yog*, on the other hand is primarily related to the field of sentience. It involves development of profound faith and total emotional surrender. With constant practice, devotion (*bhakti*) and love are made natural reactions. One who dedicates his life to promotion of high ideals is known as *Yogi* whereas those who remain engaged merely in rituals of religious practices without any emotional involvement, may at the most be known as priests (*pujari*). Treatments (*upchars*) and emotional involvement (*Yog ekatmya*) are complementary techniques. If *upchar* is an arrow, *Yog ekatmya*, is the bow propelling it. The distance to which the arrow travels and the force with which it strikes depends on the tension of the string of the bow. In the absence of a bow, the arrow becomes totally ineffective. Yet the bow by itself, can produce results comparable to that of propulsion of an arrow, by throwing small pebbles. However, this statement does not belittle the importance of *upchar* (the physical treatment by rituals). A writer needs a pen, a tailor, a needle, a painter, a brush and an instrumentalist, a piece of orchestra, but with it he also requires a sharpness of inherent talent in absence of which the implements cannot bring him any credit or success. The *upchars* (treatments) of religious rituals too follow the same set of rules. They are as much necessary as emotional involvement (*yog*). One cannot afford to disregard them. How would a blacksmith or an instrumentalist demonstrate his skill if he is not provided with a hammer or a musical instrument? How can one expect a barber to shave without a razor?

Let us take another example. The significance of seed is well known. Without seeds, it is neither possible to do farming nor to raise a garden. In spite of its importance, singly, seeds do not help in reaping a crop or in making one prosperous by producing fruits. Arrangements for providing fertilizer and irrigation are as much necessary as sowing of the seeds. Here we are comparing seeds with *upasna upchar* (treatment through rituals of religion). To make it grow into a blossoming plant, water and fertilizer are essentially required which is emotional involvement and faith. This is in a nutshell the mystery or the focal point on which success or failure of *sadhana* depends.

While adhering to a fixed routine or prescribed procedure of daily rituals of prayers and oblations (*pooja-upchar*) each serious aspirant looking forward to culmination of *sadhana* into para-normal achievement should also keep a watch on himself to see whether they are also bringing in a progressive enhancement of faith in his deity (*ishta*) which is the ultimate goal ? Just as a body devoid of life is known as a corpse, mere rituals of prayers-oblations unaccompanied by faith are reduced to a mockery of worship.

Of what use is a corpse to anyone ? Similarly the time spent in faithless worship without any emotional involvement gives only the limited benefit of avoidance of misutilization of time and engagement in some useful practice for the duration. But with only this much of effort one should not expect or aspire for some miraculous results. All *sadhaks* (persons engaged in *sadhana*) have to make much more endeavour to incorporate excellence (*utkrishtata*) in their *bhav chetana* (field of sen-

tience) than is required for the daily routine of *upasana upchar*. It requires the highest level of industry and enterprise (*purusharth*) comparable to an effort to convert a desert into a blossoming garden.

There are quite a few deluded ones who consider religious rituals of *pooja-upchar* themselves as the means of acquiring para-normal powers for sensory and extra-sensory achievements (*riddhi* and *siddhi*) and create a dream world for themselves by fanciful aspiration of becoming a wizard capable of performing stupendous feats like the instant magic shows of magicians. Not succeeding in their efforts, they are found giving vent to their despair and anger like atheists, putting all sorts of illogical blames on the science of worship (*upasana vigyan*). We are well aware that magic is only a delusion created by sleight of hand. Production of objects out of nothing and breeding pigeons from hats are totally contrary to the laws of nature. One can make money out of earth, but it requires well established processes in which farmers, potters or workers of kiln are engaged. Those who impatiently aspire to see the result of their *pooja-upchar* as acquisition of capabilities of a magician, continue to swing in the see-saw of hope and despair. As a matter of fact spirituality (*adhyatm*) is a well established science of rectification of supra-conscious (*antah chetna*). The efforts to incorporate high ideals in life are commensurately rewarded by enhancement of piety and talents. It is well established that persons possessing a high level of character succeed in whatever field of action they plunge in. On the other hand the "magicians of *mantra* and *tantra*" (those believing in performing instant miracles with the help of religious rituals, charms, talisman etc), hardly ever pay any attention to reformation of

their character. They aspire for instant acquisition of para-normal capabilities merely with the help of the so-called magical processes and rituals, which can only be acquired after earning appropriate qualifications and spontaneity of righteous actions. In this world everyone has to pay appropriate price for any achievement of lasting value. Only tramps and petty thieves dream about becoming rich overnight by planning to break open safes and picking pockets here and there. Besides, ultimately they have to pay heavy price for such instant benefits. Those persons who plan to obtain celestial attributes (which are obtainable by hard endeavour only), with limited efforts of religious rituals, belong to the above category.

Now a days all fields of human activity are infested with misconceptions. Concepts of religion have specially become distorted to a great extent. The extent to which the science of self-advancement and character-building has fallen into disgrace, is very distressing. Before going into the positive and negative aspects of rituals of *upchar* (treatment), one is advised to examine the various existing spiritual practices to find out how far these are based on truth and facts. Unfortunately, now-a-days showmanship of magicians and fleecing of gullibles have taken place of noble practice of self-advancement. Today all and sundry aspire to get rewarded with a multitude of super achievements by performing a variety of strange rituals. If success of such rituals is to be believed, this cosmic-system created by God would cease to have any place for competence, qualification and hard work and all major achievements would be found appearing from the hats of magicians.

Each and every student endeavouring to know the *tatva-gyan* (fundamental aspects) of spirituality is required to follow *pooja upchar* (treatment by prayer and oblations) as well as *Atm parishkar* (self purification by expulsion of vices from within) simultaneously. In order to expel the accumulated evil traits (*kusunskars*) and for augmentation of virtuous tendencies one is required to suppress immaturity of character and mould the raw habits which have become a natural ingredient of character. This aspect of self-advancement is related to ascetic exercises (*tapashcharya*) for harnessing the mind and taking pledges to promote ideals (*vratsheelta*). The other facet is external, in which, like treatment of body through physical exercises, a regular practice is maintained to control, systematise and improve the efficacy of the subliminal conscience with the help of rituals of prayer and oblation (*pooja-upchar*). Here only this much is to be constantly remembered that the entire process of spiritual *sadhana* is meant to upgrade the internal and external facets of life with imbibition of high ideals. The effort made by any individual in furtherance of this objective is commensurately rewarded with development of character in proportion to the degree of involvement. This is the internal celestial attribute with the help of which one augments the strength of inner self, achieving the status of superman besides providing name, fame and social security to the area of personal influence.

The science of spirituality is indeed a field of supermagic. Feats of millions of magicians collectively stand nowhere in comparison to the glorious contributions and golden history made by magnanimity of character and activities of the supermen of the world. While persuing spiritual objectives, one should aspire to achieve

the ideals of such superman. The immature childish ambitions of becoming a performer of magic shows should be *identified* and thrown together in the dustbin. Simultaneously, attempt should be made to bring out the enlightenment of the inner self (*atm tejas*) which only can make it possible to bring out a total transformation in the ingrained evil traits, nature and habits.

Expansion of close affinity and a sense of belonging beyond one's own self (*atmeeyata*) is itself *bhaktiyog*. With practice, it makes everyone appear as one's own and a feeling of love and selfless service naturally arises. The constantly emerging bliss from within self has been given various names like *amrit* (nectar, ambrosia), *atm-durshun* (illumination of inner self), *Brahm-Sakchatkar* (communion with God) by the scholars of spirituality. The *Jeevan Mukta* (detached from worldly desires) and *Devadoot* (messenger of God) are blessed with the same status of inner self.

Gyan-yog is farsighted prudence. People in general tend to prefer instant gains (with total disregard to the needs and consequences in the future) as the maximal of their achievements. Because of this narrow outlook their mental faculties continue to be preoccupied with planning and programming for luxury, accumulation, and squandering. When after thus spending more or less their entire life the moment of truth of consequences arrives, they are left with no option but to repent for the past misdeeds. The objective of *gyan-yog* is to disqualify illogical dogmas being blindly followed by the masses, thereby inducing them to utilize their own independent faculty of prudent discrimination. With such a motivation, *gyan-yog* provides for the collective will, strength and cooperation amongst

the masses. In this way, it conjoins with divine objectives, based on new disciplines, which are otherwise being wasted in beastly activities of eating, collecting and procreation.

A *karmayogi* does not waste his creative faculty in just earning his livelihood, rearing children, yearning for material gains and boosting his vanity. Rising above these lowly activities he uses his energy in idealistic pursuits. The doctrine of simple living and high thinking is synonymous with *karmayogi*. Adoption of an idealistic life style necessarily means application of self-restraint. It also requires a voluntary reduction in needs and aspirations bringing them at par with those of the common countymen. Only after making it feasible can one spare energy, time, mental faculties and resources for welfare activities conducive to promotion of high ideals. The subconscious state of *karmayogi* induces such an ideology in him. His points of view, inclination and efforts necessarily continue to incorporate and promote idealism.

The *karmayogis* become supermen (*mahamanav*) (social reformers, martyrs and the like). *Gyanyogis* are called *Rishis* (saints) and *bhatiyogis*, being detached from worldly affairs are known as incarnations or messengers of God. Human entity comprises three bodies (one, the apparent physical body and the other two extra-sensory bodies). In order to reach the ultimate goal, one is required to purify each of these three bodies. The physical body (*sthool shareer*) is cleansed with *karmyog* and astral body (*sookchma shareer*) with *Gyan-yog*. This is the only highway to self-advancement. Journey along this very highway provides the opportunity to transform a man on the street into an exclusive person who electrifies the

entire environment around himself with idealism by bringing about revolutionary changes in the society. The outcome of endeavours of such persons is so much overwhelming that the intelligentsia does not fail to recognise them as miraculous persons possessing supernatural powers (*sidhha purush*) and is seen conceding to their superiority in millions of ways. Only the immature and childish persons aspire for development of magician-like capabilities in themselves which they yearn to show to others. Those having the maturity of wisdom do not pay any heed to such performances. They find a plentiful of such miracles in upgradation of their own character, with progressive imbibition of idealism in points of views, inclinations and activities. Persons with lowly bent of mind cannot even dream of this throughout their life.

Each technique of *pooja upchar* is based on some basic philosophy (*tatva darshan*). Following the tenets of this philosophy, one is first required to deliberate, learn, mould accordingly and then begin a practice of total emotional surrender (*Atm-Samarpan*) to his deity chosen as representative of omnipresent God (*Ista-dev*). As a matter of fact, the strong motivating force inherent in various types of *sadhan upchars* itself is a mass of vital force charged with enormous celestial energy (*pran punj*). Unless this is properly understood and believed there is no doubt that the expected high level of achievements will not be possible merely with the help of rituals and limited physical activities of prayer. On the other hand if faith and devotion (*bhav-nishtha*) inherent in rituals is understood in its true sense and life is moulded accordingly, the person would assuredly find waves of idealism engulfing the sub-conscience, which in course of time

would not only upgrade his character but also change him into a person with para-normal capabilities (*siddha purush*) having the competence to perform astounding feats.

As regards the form, level and working of divine powers, the sooner this fact is understood the better it would be that they cannot be deceived into granting the status of a devotee to all and sundry. They would not instantly fulfil all just and unjust desires of a person under the influence of flattery, dexterity of speech and offerings of small gifts like flowers, burning of incense, candles, lamps etc. One who has this concept of worship (*sadhana*) by which one hopes to coax and misguide the divinity, is advised, that instead of getting despaired after getting entangled in the complexity of misguidance and giving vent to despondency later, it is better to avoid the rituals of *bhajan-poojan* (prayers and oblations) altogether. Hoping for success on the basis of industriousness is both logical as well as factual. Instead of expecting divine grace against performance of small rituals, it is much more prudent to keep at a safe distance from this affair.

The deities (various personifications of powers of God) should not be regarded as gullible rulers collecting oblations and giving boons in return. Nor in absence of merit or worthiness, one should expect fulfillment of just and unjust desires. The divine powers are omnipotent. They are capable of granting anything. But before giving, they subject the person to a thousand acid tests to find out the level of worthiness of the person. They want to be assured of the credibility of the person for utilization of the powers to be bestowed. They also consider whether the objective for which their grace is required is

legitimate. Only after getting fully assured of the above aspects, the divine powers are seen showering their grace on someone.

The environmental magnetism of vegetation on earth compels the clouds flying high in the sky to descend down and shower rains. Likewise coordination of dedication to high character (*Charitra Nistha*) and dedication to the society (*Samaj Nishtha*) create the magnetism which forces divine grace to shower on the *sadhak*. Hence, instead of thinking of angling divine powers with the baits of prayers and oblations, one should endeavour to find out ways and means of developing worthiness (*patrata*) to such an extent, that the divine powers cannot rest without showering their grace. The amount of water to be filled in, in a container depends on the capacity of the container. The largest pond cannot empty itself into a vessel beyond its capacity. The divine powers too are bound by similar codes of action.

Instead of asking for boons, one should develop one's own competence to the level, where it becomes possible to grant boons to others. In fact blessings are given only by benevolent saints. Acts of benevolence like upliftment of the downtrodden, helping the infirm and providing resources to those on the path of self-advancement are undertaken by saints only. God is only a system which, like fire or electricity helps only on the pre-condition of proper utilization. At the same time God does not forgive and gives punishment for misutilization of natural resources for evil designs. In this context, HE is not found differentiating between a devotee and an atheist. For seeking an employment an application is written and an appointment is granted on the basis of

this application. Nevertheless, this is to be remembered that in between, the applicant has to go through the process of examinations and competitions. God does not bestow HIS grace immediately after the prayer (application) is made, but he also examines whether the person, offering prayer has developed required level of worthiness and has dependability.

The real objective of worshipping (*upasana*) is to wipe the temple of one's sub-conscious, to make it sufficiently clean to make it acceptable to the cosmic power to enter it. We clean the body everyday by taking bath and teeth are cleaned by regular brushing. The apartment is to be wiped each day for removing the trash. This daily routine of cleaning has only one objective i.e. to save oneself from the bad odour, sickness and disorder created by accumulation of trash and dust. This process of cleaning does not create any miracle. Adoption of cleanliness make one feel lighter. It provides an acceptability in the civilized community and an easy means of protection against the diseases arising out of dirtiness. Similarly, daily rituals of *sadhana* are required for cleaning the conscience from accumulations of evil thoughts. If instead of being satisfied with so many advantages one expects miracles of para-normal powers of *Riddhi* and *Siddhi* in return of these daily rituals of cleanliness, it would be regarded as immaturity and childish behaviour. The advantages of *upasana* should also be viewed in the same context as those of cleaning one's spartment.

God is an aggregation (*samuchchay*) of ideals. *Upasana* means sitting in proximity (of God). How much in proximity? It should be like a damp log of wood, which on coming closer to fire gives up dampness and

with absorption of heat of fire continues to dry. Reaching still closer to the fire, the wood itself becomes one with the fire. This is what an authentic *upasana* should be. Attempting to come in close contact with God—who is an ensemble of Absolute Ideals and divine virtues, the *sadhak* should progressively imbibe them within him in maximum proportion. These are the celestial attributes which impart magnanimity, humility, benevolence and generosity to his personality. There is no need to mention that only a person of high character is in a way a possessor of para-normal capabilities (*siddha pursush*). The status of such a person in the society is in every respect evaluated millions of times higher than the common multitude of humanoid animals i.e. human beings living and behaving like animals. A person of high character is showered with honours and cooperation from all quarters. Whoever succeeds in reaching this advantageous position, also continues to benefit from higher levels of achievements successively. Such are the persons who are acknowledged for their greatness in all fields of human activity and are known to have reached the peaks of success in every walk of life. This is the blissful resultant which one may consider as the miracle of *upasana*.

God is akin to a judge without any prejudice, whatsoever. In HIS court, all are evaluated exclusively on the scale of fidelity or credibility (*pramanikta*) and adherence to benevolence (*paramarth parayanta*). He is neither in need of praise (prayers) nor of gifts (oblations). He remains indifferent to being addressed by some name or the other, nor does he care when someone does not call him by any name. He does not need any gift. Why should the governor of all the resources of the world have any such desire or need? It reflects only our immaturity that

we try to influence this supreme cosmic power by our petty rituals and in return expect Him to fulfill our just and unjust desires. When such a prejudice is not expected even from an honest judge on this earth, it would be the height of folly to hope that a cosmic power like that of God would disregard and disrupt the established system of the creation which ensures bestowal of benefits only to the worthy.

Whoever desires to do *upasana* of God, should keep the foregoing facts in mind. With the help of the celestial inspirations derived from *upasana* an attempt should be made to activate the dormant characteristics of one's positive attributes, capabilities of action and mental faculties. This is the only methodology to qualify for all those para-normal capabilities which have been, from time to time, advocated by saints and scholars of ancient scriptures (literature on spirituality), as obtainable to the followers of *Bhakti Yog Sadhana*.

MISCONCEPTIONS RELATED TO UPASANA AND ERADICATION THEREOF.

There is yet another variety of *sadhana* like *tantrik*, *aghor* and *kapalik* etc. performed for quick returns and ulterior worldly motives in which disregarding the emotional aspects, rituals are given importance. The miraculous benefits from such *sadhanas* accrue not because of evolution of character, but are as a consequence of strengthening of psychic powers as a mundane exercise. Machines are devoid of any sentient component. They are only capable of mechanical actions. This *kriya shakti* (kinetic and potential energy) is found inherent and acting in the inanimate matter of the world. During the performance of *tantrik sadhanas* a stimulus is created to release some specific energies entrapped within the human body and mind. These energies are then used for fulfillment of desired objectives irrespective of their ethical propriety. *Maran* (telekinetic technique of inflicting physical injury), *mohan* (bewitchment), *uchchatan* (bringing distraction in a man's mind by the help of incantations), *vashikaran* (overpowering of a man's mind-like hypnosis), *stumbhun* (obstruction by remote action) etc. are all, uses of *tantra* for unethical malicious purposes. The creator has made acquisition of such powers difficult and full of complexity of procedures. Besides, indulgence in these techniques has also not been kept free of physical dangers to the user.

Electricity is the expression of a type of physical energy. It is useful in many respects, but with a little carelessness creates a threat to life and property. Gunners are aware of the impact of recoil in the reverse direction during firing. An atomic explosion does create energy but at the same time poses the danger of exten-

sive devastation by radiation. Those playing with fireworks or engaged in hunting of carnivora, do so at great risk to their life. This is also true of *tantric sadhanas*. At times persons have even become deranged, because of some minor irregularity of specified prescribed procedure. The use of physical powers is always governed by strict rules. Deviations and inadvertence are never forgiven. The snake-charmer too, at times becomes a victim of the snake. Because of little carelessness, the carnivora of circus are known to have mauled their tamers. At times, the owners-operators of machines have been found becoming dismembered or killed by their own equipment. In this world, right or wrong actions are seen being rewarded or punished within a short period.

The domain of sentience (*bhavna*), however, has an entirely different code of reactions. It is governed by high ideals, *shraddha* and empathies. In the realm of sentience, ritualistic treatments are of no significance whatsoever, whereas love and compassion are rated sky high. A child creates innumerable problems for the mother and does not follow any code of civil conduct. Even then there continues to exist an unparalleled interrelationship of close intimacy between the mother and the child because of the intensity of affection and maternal fondness between the two. The behavioural pattern of a child is raw and like that of an uncivilized person, but the mother is never found irritated because of it. His simple endearing acts like raising hands to be picked up or, smiling while exchanging a glance, are sufficient to win over the mother completely. This is the type of interaction between the devotee and his objective-the diety in the path of rightist method of *upasana*. In such *sadhanas*, insufficiency of rituals or breaks do not create any major

hindrance. Nevertheless, it is advisable for each class of the worshipper to be cautious in following the rules and regulations, authenticity of which should be ensured beforehand.

In the *vedik dakchinmargi* school of *bhakti sadhana*, emotional involvement plays a dominant role. Although this school too takes the help of various type of rituals, there are no religious decrees to adhere to them as strictly, as is necessary for the *tantrik sadhanas* in which least deviations create danger to life. This is the difference between the *vedik* and *tantrik sadhanas*. Any inadvertent mistake or deviations in *vedik sadhana* would at the most result in lesser benefits than were expected or cause a delay in fructification. There is absolutely no scope for any apprehensions.

It is well known that sage Valmiki could not pronounce RAM - the name of God incarnate, correctly and achieved the status of a *siddha purush* merely by pronouncing it reversely as (MARA). There were no adverse effects of his wrong enunciations. On the other hand, the excellence of his *shraddha* associated with the naivete of rituals continued to elevate him, till he reached the pinnacle of success in super-wisdom. There are multitudes of known\uneducated and naive *sadhaks* who were neither aware of specified methodologies of rituals nor were used to them, but nevertheless, succeeded in achieving higher goals. A long list of semi-literate persons comprising women like Shabri and Kubja and men like Kabir, Raidas and Namdev could be presented, who achieved the supreme goal (of communion with God) not by virtue of their expertise in techniques of *sadhana* but with the help of emotional involvement and *shraddha*. From the point

of view of the standards of rituals, there must have been errors in their performance, but it did not do any harm. During the middle ages of feudalism *tantrik sadhus* of deities like Durga and Bhairav were prevalent. During this period, defeating the enemy and gaining power were the commonly sought after goals. Consequently, besides adopting terrorising tactics the persecutors also took the help of rituals of *sadhanas* of spiritual sciences to become all powerful. For this class of people the "*Asuri*" *tantra* methodology was found suitable and for such objectives, it has also been traditionally employed. Those who entered the field of such *sadhanas* for fulfilling their own selfish motives had to take utmost care about the rules and regulations of rituals. Such *sadhanas* were two-edged weapons-often destroying the user in the event of least carelessness. Because of this factor, details of rituals were rightly given more importance. For this very reason, the aspirants took the help of expert *pundits* for such *sadhanas*. The entire process of *purushcharan* (a highly specialised advanced form of *sadhana*) from beginning to the end is such that it requires strict adherence to the correct technique of pronunciation and ritual, which only an expert can perform. Apprehensions of harm in those days compelled people to seek the help of *pundits* necessarily. So much so, that they could not muster courage even to perform the every day *agnihotra* without their help.

In the dark medieval period when only *tantrik* treatments became order of the day and consumption of liquors, non-vegetarianism and orgies of sex made inroads into the domain of *upasana*, incarnation of Buddha made an appearance and uprooted the extensive corruption from the society. The class of priests (*purohits*) then

presiding over the rituals of *upasana* found this changing trend detrimental to their interests and in order to justify the necessity of their expertise and also to find new means of earning, forcefully advocated the concept that accuracy of methodology of rituals was sacrosanct and least deviation therefrom invited ire and revenge of the deities. This belief was meticulously planted and publicised and much was said and written in its support.

Though, the above concept had some amount of validity for *tantrik* treatments, unfortunately it also began to influence the *vedik* dakshin margi- *sadhanas* and *upasana* being performed for noble objectives and in course of time, took deep roots as legitimate dogma. Consequently, even in daily rituals of *sadhana* people began to nurture apprehensions about displeasures of the deity in the event of least irregularity of rituals.

Apprehensions of adverse reactions change into convictions, particularly when under the normal circumstances the devotee comes across some sudden unforeseen problem, failure or calamity in life. On account of the preconceived notions, the first thought which comes to trouble his mind is that the untoward event is related to some fault in his practice of *pooja-upchar* (religious ritual). In such a situation, he becomes confused with the dilemma whether he should continue his *upasana*, which would aggravate the existing situation, or discontinue it and invite wrath and bane of the deity. Finding himself between the devil and the deep sea he thinks of getting rid of this unnecessary affair altogether.

Such misconcepts have now become so deep-rooted in human minds that many emotional worshippers

who are not aware of fundamentals of spirituality, begin to relate all problems in life with some inaccuracy of the authenticity of rituals and some fault in their observance.

The truth is contrary to this belief. Members of this mission (*Pragya Parivar*) perform only righteous (*satvik*) *upasana*. Neither they are advised about methods of *tantrik upasana* nor they are encouraged to follow them. In *satvik upasana* there is absolutely no possibility of harm due to errors in performance. At the most the benefits are reduced or delayed. (This is also supported by Geeta Chapte-2 verse 40).

The name of Almighty and routine of *upasana* produces only one kind of result i.e. amelioration of the miseries produced as a consequence of pollution of mind and body by evil deeds. It is intrinsically incapable of producing any adverse reactions. Hence there is no scope for any apprehensions. The benevolence of God is like that of mother. SHE can neither inflict any harm nor even think of it. Mother earth, the mother in cow, the mother in nature are all instinctly loving and helping. The question of degrading or troubling their own protegee does not ever arise. Besides, the school of devotion through *sadhana* and *upasana* itself ensures amelioration of sufferings, not their aggravation.

Contemplation on undesirable subjects have adverse effect on the thinker himself. Negative mental faculties of anger, jealousy, worry, fear, apprehension etc. are harmful only to the person possessing them. They hardly produce any adverse reactions for the object to which they are related. The cause for adversities generally lies in a person's past and present misconceptions, shortcom-

ings, evil traits or deeds themselves. Divine punishment should be viewed only as a reprimand, so that more care is taken in future, right course of actions taken and evils resisted with greater competence. Adversities produced by natural disasters too are meant to test and strengthen the tolerance of man so that he does not lose poise in abnormal situations. It is well known that those who gained recognition in the society for their unusual gifts or talents, had developed their great competence and efficiency only after confronting adversities in life. The ways of Almighty are strange. He acts in many a way to reprimand mankind and bring in reforms. The environment of world affairs changes in its own way and produces adverse conditions for the humanity. Changes in natural environment too, at times trouble the innocent alongwith the few guilty of producing it. Negative elements (*asuri tantra*) also continue to harm without rhyme or reason. Thus there may be many reasons for the adversities befalling a person. It is, therefore, illogical to lay the blame for them on the trivialities of *upasana*.

It is a common weakness of human mind that it tries to find an easy relief in seeking the cause of his own problems in faults of someone else. We frequently hear complaints about personal or family problems being created due to some influence of someone. There is quite a large number of such persons who think in this manner and keep on cursing the innocent neighbour for their own troubles. There are millions of other category of fools who continue to blame the evil spirits or planets and stars for their adversities. There are fatalists complaining about the injustice of God for the lines on their palms. A multitude blames parents for failures in life. None of these persons ever thinks of even one of the causes for his

failures which would expose mishandling of affairs because of his own inadequacies, confused visions, misdemeanour or corrupt thinking. It is found much easier to blame some innocent medium like *upasana* which is not capable of strong retaliation in defence.

Unjust accusations only tarnish one's own soul. With it, opportunities of self-appraisal and self-advancement are lost. Personal strength for surmounting obstacles is depleted. Where does one find the strength to retaliate against the deity or the God regarded as the cause of adversity? In such a situation, the despondent persons find solace only in shedding tears or cursing those considered responsible. This state of mind often proves to be detrimental to possibilities of prosperity in future.

It must be emphasized once again that for success in *upasana*, the role of rituals is only ten percent, whereas that of intensified *shraddha* ninety percent. Any wavering of *shraddha* should be considered as a warning, that routine adherence to rituals is not likely to produce any results. Whenever, the concept of correlation of *upasana* with the advent of adversities, appears in mind, one should conclude that a situation is being created in which there is no scope for *shraddha*, to take roots. Besides, any *tantra* (system) which produces adverse effects from humility and prayer must be of the lowest order and is, therefore, despicable. Taking help of such a system would always involve apprehensions of troubles. It is thus explicit that no foundation of *shraddha* - *vishwas*, *bhakti* - *bhavna*, *sneh-samarpan* devotional surrender can be laid on a state of mind full of apprehensions of fear, uncertainty and revengeful reactions. In the absence

of *astha* (*shraddha* and *vishwas*) even the most superior techniques of *upasana* would remain futile for anyone and for any objectives, whatsoever. Besides, not only the efforts made for this purpose would not bear any fruits, the bitterness generated because of failure would gradually drift the *sadhak* towards atheism. It is thus apparent that such persons are in a better position who are casual about *upasana* than those described earlier, who do not perform any type of *upasana* at all. At least they escape the unnecessary disenchantment of dissatisfaction, bitterness and atheism. For those doing *upasana* (in whatever way) there may not be any gains but there are no uncalled for losses either.

A minimal expectation from any type of devotional activity (*upasana*) should be assistance in self-purification (*atm parishkar*). It is to be expected that through *upasana* the door to augmentation of virtuous traits would open and such contentment, public cooperation and divine grace would be made available as is accrued to noble persons by virtue of development of character. If the fruits of *upasana* are to be weighed further on the scales of profit and loss, there should develop a strong conviction in the concept that *upasana* would increase the possibility of benefits manifold. Even the accruing physical gains, which may or may not eliminate the problems altogether, but would decisively ameliorate their consequences. Inner strength developed with *upasana* reduces the burden of coming hardships to half, if not to one third.

Basically, there is no need to interrelate adversity of circumstances and *upasana*, since they belong to independent fields. Suitability of circumstances or otherwise

generally depends on the competence and expertise of the person concerned, whereas *upasana* provides an opportunity for activating the dormant virtuous instincts buried deep in the inner self for imbibition of cultural excellence. The degree of success in worldly affairs or acquisition of resources depend on expertise and talents of a person. *Upasana*, on the other hand, incorporates excellence in the outlook, character, status and field of activity. Hence there is no logic in correlating the two. However, if one finds it difficult to believe that *upasana* is not correlatable to wordly profits and loss, one could rely on one of the following viewpoints. The credit for successes in life may be given to *upasana* and the responsibility should be owned for failures because of shortcomings of one's own *prarabhda-purushartha* (consequences of earlier misdeeds and inadequacies of effort). With only such standards, *shraddha* can be perpetuated and the doors of self-advancement could be kept open. Corrupt thinking is harmful in every way. Where one tends to take the credit for success, and puts the blame for remaining troubles on *upasana*, the only result would be total elimination of the little *shraddha* present within him. With this, all future possibilities of self-advancement will come to a dead-end. It would mean "digging one's own grave" Harboursing the aforesaid misconceptions would not bring any benefits but would on the contrary, engulf the person in uncertainties. It would be nothing but duplication of follies.

Just as there is no logic in correlating adversity of circumstances with the excellent support of *upasana*, it is also unjustified to use it as a bribe or bait to tempt the Almighty. When one says that a certain amount of money will be spent for a certian religious purpose or so much of

Jup-Anushthan will be performed on successful fulfillment of some objective, it amounts to offering of a conditioned allurements to the deity. This type of "bribe" is given by some in advance while others offer it on completion of the assignment. In either way, this practice should be discontinued. Such acts may be regarded as disrespectful by God and He may react in the manner in which honest judges do on being offered a bribe. Giving or taking bribe both are crimes. Hence performance of a particular ritual (*pooja upchar*) in lieu of some worldly gain would only be considered an utter degradation of the devotee, his devotion and the deity. Performers of *upasana* are advised to remember the sanctity of the rite and whether or not they intend to do *upasana* they are advised to refrain from degrading its level. It is better to be an atheist than downgrade it by dragging the deity in filth and infamy.

AN EXQUISITE SADHANA FOR THE JUNCTURE OF THE TWO CENTURIES - "DHYAN DHARNA" (MEDITATION)

(A unique opportunity for celestial boons)

Although the significance of human endeavour cannot be belittled, success becomes doubly assured with the concurrence of a suitable environment. Environment plays a key role in all walks of life. Take for instance the growth of vegetation. The growth of a seed depends on earth. Nevertheless, during the onset of monsoon seeds get an opportunity to sprout easily and plants grow faster. Flowers blossom round the year, but during spring (*Vasant*) trees and vegetation are found laden with a more luxurious growth of flowers and newly grown leaves. Health promoting experiments are more successful during the winter season. Nature wipes and cleans extensive landforms by creating storms during the summer, which it rarely does during the remaining part of the year.

Whether it is a boat or a cycle, moving in the direction of wind, it gains more momentum. An expert teacher naturally produces better students. With availability of suitable resources, wisdom and hard work produce miraculous achievements. These are some examples of efficacy of suitable environment indicating that the importance of favourable external factors in increasing the pace of progress should not be underrated. Take some more examples. The unemployed find it easier to get employment when jobs are announced. Otherwise they have to wait, in spite of possessing appropriate qualifications. With increase in demand, a producer gains more profit. On the other hand, even after a surplus production, a hard worker incurs loss by selling his product at reduced rates.

In the field of *sadhana* too, though human endeavour has supreme importance, environment and circumstances play a major role in helping or hindering its progress. The credit for success of Hanuman, Angad, Nal, Neel and their companions in the historical war against Ravan, rightly goes to the valour of these warriors. Nevertheless, it is to be remembered that had there not been contingencies arising out of abduction of Sita or elimination of oppression of the marauders, these brave men would have been leading an uneventful life like any other of their countrymen. In absence of a suitable opportunity, one feels at a loss to take any action capable of yielding good results. History tells us about the cowherds who received credit for the feat performed by Krishna who planned to lift Goverdhan and asked for their assistance. Otherwise, they had no opportunity to come in limelight. Only during the period of a threat to security of the country, a government distributes those arms to citizen, licenses for which in normal circumstances, are very difficult to obtain. It is a tournament which provides the wrestler an opportunity to exhibit his skill and win a trophy. Otherwise, he has to remain contented with his routine practice at home. Unless there are elections, how would popular social workers get an opportunity to become public representatives?

The few examples given above are meant to emphasize the significance of opportune moments of time, which when available, should be made use of. Moments of opportunity should never be wasted in lethargy and negligence. *Navratri*, is a specific opportune period and *sadhana* and *anushtans* carried out during which, bring in relatively greater success. Taking bath in holy rivers on special occasions (*parva*) has the same

significance and is believed to bring greater celestial benefits. For *upasana*, which may be carried out anytime during the day, there is no other period more pleasant than early morning. One may have a nap at anytime during the day, but deep sleep becomes possible only during the night. All these instances show the significance of opportunities available at particular moments, which prove that suitability of time and environment play significant role in the success of an operation.

There are, however, no restrictions imposed in respect of performance of *sadhanas* of spirituality by anyone at any time. Nevertheless, at times one comes across some such specific opportunity by virtue of which greater advantages can be obtained with much less effort than is otherwise possible with hard endeavour. The benefits accruing on these occasions are called *Daivi Anudan* (celestial gifts of God).

When Ramakrishna Paramhans thought of a plan, he found out an appropriate person in Vivekanand for its implementation and transferred to him the required spiritual strength for fulfillment of the desired objective, from his own resources of *tup*. Similarly, Shivaji was obliged by Samarth Ramdas and Chandragupta by Chankya. In recent history, Vinoba in India came into limelight only with the active support of Gandhi. In this world we come across many leading a comfortable life by virtue of inheritance of property which would be viewed as a favourable financial environment. Likewise, most of the students obtaining higher education and for being progressive, depend on financial help from guardians. Notwithstanding some exceptions, wherein some rare deserving persons have achieved success in life inspite of discouraging

circumstances, there is little doubt that had there not been paucity of resources and adversity of environment, their gains would have been much higher for which they would have taken relatively lesser time.

We are passing through a juncture of two centuries (which we may call "*yug sandhi*"), which is a very significant transitional period in modern human history. Such moments come to pass once in a millennium when the creator decides to make some significant changes in the world order. The grace of God is felt by the human beings as inspirations and enlightenment in the inner-self. In this world HIS will is manifested as events. However, in order to translate HIS will into actions, God needs human beings and their endeavour. This is what has been happening earlier in ancient times. Appearing as super-humans, messengers of God and "torch bearers of century" (*yug pravartak*), representatives of the creator have been fulfilling HIS wishes. The *Nirakar Brahm* (omnipresent formless God), who is beyond limits of time and space, cannot be confined to a group of persons and like ordinary people take care of the adversities of environment. In this world too, heads of administrative units only plan and direct schemes and in pursuance of their directives, numerous officers and members of staff undertake various types of activities. It is, however, true that in this process, authorities are delegated and resources provided for by the head of the administration. In their individual capacity, the member of an administrative unit cannot achieve that much, which they are able to do as part of the organization collectively.

The efficacy of collective endeavours is well known. Though doctors diagnose and prescribe and apparently

the patients are benefited by their services, the entire system of medical treatment in a medical institution is indirectly governed by extraneous assistance in various forms. In absence of arrangements of suitable buildings, implements, drugs and wages, even experienced doctors will feel helpless and would not be able to do much. The analogy also holds true about the soldiers. The credit for valour and victory is given to their own endeavour. Nevertheless, everyone knows that many of their necessities like transportation, uniform, food and civil supplies, arms and armaments are provided by the Ministry of Defence. On his own, Parushram would not have succeeded in his crusade of global victory. It became possible for him only after he took determined steps involving heavy risks for fulfillment of the will of Shiva. Nal-Neel could prepare a bridge on ocean for Ram by floating rocks. Had they thought of their own projects like ordinary contractors, they would not have succeeded in this work. A soldier who thinks of attacking his neighbors to take revenge is not permitted to use those armaments which are given to him for the warfront for defending the nation. The foregoing examples would show that bestowal of extraordinary benefits in any walk of life is always related to the objectives of effort.

Blessings of God have always descended on some extraordinary men as spiritual grants (*adhyatmic anudan*) for the benefit of mankind or during emergencies in human history. From time to time the *Gurus* have been granting favours to the disciples and the deities to the worshipers in many a way, but at the same time they have been taking care to see that the gainer does not usurp the advantages to serve petty selfish objectives of his own. Once it is understood that divine grace is meant

only for celestial objectives, the delusion in which people expect it cheaply for selfish motives in lieu of casual religious practices, would disappear and they would be saved from negative results of such unethical exercises.

At this juncture of the centuries, (*yug sandhi*) the celestial powers responsible for establishing the new world order are in search of enlightened souls for divine objectives. They want such persons to be the torch bearers. In this process, while on one hand the will of Almighty is fulfilled, the persons taking part in its implementation get the credit for mustering courage to be the craftsmen of the New Golden Era (*yug shilpi*). The Pandavas had come to limelight in this very manner. God had agreed to become Charioteer of Arjun because he had readily come forward to assist HIM in the difficult task of structuring of Greater Bharat - the *Mahabharat*, according to HIS wishes. Shri Krishna handed over his entire wealth to Sudama only after getting assured of his prudence for efficient management of HIS vast *Gurukul* (Institution of learning). Had Sudama begged for wealth, he would have got petty favours and that too given out of pity.

Presently, the deity of the century (*Yug Devta*) has decided to shower such unusual capabilities on mankind which a person could not hope to obtain at some other time for his personal requirements even after hard and prolonged endeavour. Gems from the ocean of *Chetna* (supra-conscience) are made available to only those who make persistent hard endeavours with *yog*, *tup* (asceticism), research in science of spirituality and acts of service to mankind. But when an emperor (God) thinks of obliging, some lucky person, a diamond necklace is ob-

tained without spending a dime. However, such a possibility is always associated with one condition, that the giver should develop some unusual generosity towards the taker. In this context, there is no doubt, that such a situation does not arise because of some accidental emotional outburst of the giver nor as a consequence of repeated pleadings by the taker. There must exist some exclusive factor to make the donor so much emotionally involved that he is compelled to confer the favour.

These days, the creator is conferring superior powers of spirituality to the deserving and meritorious candidates. These are being made easily available to those who can give a convincing assurance for their proper utilization. Government gives financial assistance for many activities of social welfare which helps not only the beneficiary but also many more coming in contact with latter. The greatness of Buddha and Gandhi was because of celestial gifts of God which were bestowed only on the precondition that besides self-advancement they were to be used for the welfare of mankind. Narad, a renowned scholar of spirituality in ancient India was known as *Devarshi* (*Rishi* amongst the godmen). He had an exclusive freedom of access to *Vishnulok*, the abode of God (a metaphorical expression) besides permission (capability) to interact with HIM at any convenient moment. Such an honour (competence) was not bestowed to any other *Rishi*. The only reason for this unusual favour of God was that Narad utilized the extraordinary facilities granted by the Almighty freely for educating and advising mankind. Oblivious of his personal aspirations or conveniences, he was always on the move, spreading faith in god and motivating people for idealistic activities.

During this *yug sandhi*, from the spiritual centre in the Himalayas, such celestial capabilities are being beamed all over the world, receiving and imbibition of which would provide an individual extraordinary power and competence, for welfare of mankind as well as for own self. Divine gifts have always had precondition that they were given to only those whose credibility and merit or entitlement (*patrata*) for proper utilization was ascertained. God given gifts are meant only for assistance in maintenance of world order and augmentation of idealistic traits in the society. Whoever asks for divine grace for selfish motives, has to return empty handed. For personal necessities the creator has provided everyone with easy means of mind and livelihood. Unless one is overcome with superfluous greed of a Ravan and Hiranyaksha, each being has been made self-sufficient in his competence for making arrangements for an appropriate living. These days, the spiritual centre located in the Himalayas, is transmitting beams of such enlightenment which would make it possible to conjoin personal aspirations with those of humanity as a whole.

The following examples would clearly indicate the advantage of associating with God's work. One of the simplest and convenient form of business devoid of any risk is that of "Commission Agents". It is a part of the profit given to the middleman for his efforts of establishing a link between the producer and the consumer. The "Commission" (divine grace) for carrying the celestial gifts of God to the deserving persons is much more than one would need for his normal personal requirements. Even those making minimal efforts in this context are rewarded handsomely. These days the creator desires to fill each and every mind with zeal for creating a new

world order and motivate each human being to work for conjoining mass-thinking with idealistic traits. Whoever is prepared to assist in this endeavour and devote time for it is being assured here by the Almighty of all logistics and benefits.

Representatives of many business establishments travel, make contact with people and persuade the consumers through advertisement of their products. In this process they earn handsome remunerations in lieu of bare physical labour. The *rishis*, *munis* (saints), god-men and others engaged in public service have been doing the same job for God. They have been carrying the message of divinity to the masses. In this way, besides fulfilling the divine objective, they have been helping all and sundry. These servants of humanity have also been personally benefited by raising themselves to the honourable stature of saintlyhood. They earned fame, acquired celestial attributes and had the self-satisfaction of achieving the aim of their life. Today we have similar opportunity and synchronicity. Significance of the present moments of time should be apparent to the prudent ones and they must consider themselves lucky in availing of this easy opportunity. Although achievement of para-normal capabilities through *sadhana* is a time-tested doctrine, today there is a unique combination of favourable circumstances wherein, while implementing the will of the Creator, not only HIS grace and strength will be made available, HE would also be obliged for this assistance. In this context, those will be the lucky ones, who pledge to spare any fraction of their endeavour, time and resources for establishing the new world order during the *yug sandhi*. They may look forward to be appointed in honourable and responsible positions akin to a bank cashier,

wherein they will be entrusted with distribution of large celestial powers from the repository of omnipotent God. The epicentre of celestial powers is located in the north pole of the Himalayas. It is eternally drawing extra sensory resources needed for mankind from the limitless repository of God (*Brahmi Chetna*) pervading the enormous expanse of cosmos. These resources are then being distributed to various components of the earth in accordance with their need. The waste products of these extra-sensory elements (after utilization) are being discarded back in the cosmos through the south pole. All important activities of nature in the world depend on this parent source of extra-sensory energy. Just as rains from clouds are responsible for contributing every drop of water found on earth in wells, rivers, rivulets and reservoirs, the total energy inherent in the animate and inanimate objects on earth, which provides them competence to act or react is derived from its parent sources permeating the cosmos (*Brahmi Chetna*). The vitality of this planet depends on this very energy.

An identical role is played by the epicentre of spirituality (*Adhyatmik Druva Kendra*) situated in the heartland of the Himalayas. The council of *Rishis (siddha purush)* living here in astral form arrange for indenting from the infinite repository of celestial power of vitality (*divya Chetna*) of the Supreme God those significant components which are essential for human existence on this earth. Imbibing these components, they systematically distribute them to the various visible and invisible constituents of the world related to humanity, in accordance with their requirements. The headquarters of the above council which is located in the above mentioned spiritual centre, is known as the heaven on earth (*dharti ka*

swarg). Since time immemorial, this area has been the field of operation of the *Siddha Purush* (Men with para-normal capabilities). After the war of *Mahabharat*, the last journey of Pandavas refers to their expedition of "*Swargarohan*" peak of the Himalayas situated in this very region. Evolved souls, which are representatives of the Supreme Being on this earth live in this area in astral form. According to the *puranas* (ancient scriptures) the Sumeru mountain of this region, is itself the divine hill-abode of the deities.

Ascetics and *yogis* are found frequently visiting this region to take advantage of the excess quantity of vital energy (*pran oorja*) present here and for performance of higher levels of *sadhana*. The last expedition taken by the Pandavas was also meant for this purpose.

Both historically and geographically, this part of the Himalayas corresponds to the *swarg* (heaven) mentioned in the scriptures. As mentioned in ancient legends, Dashrath, Arjun and Narad had been frequently visiting this area for interacting with the deities (divine people). Students of anthropology know that Aryans migrated to middle Asia through this part of Himalayas. The area where they established their intermediate camp came to be known as "*Swarg*". The leader of the expedition, Indra settled in this area. Many in Tibet too hold this view. Theosophical society identifies this region as the abode of the council of *Siddha Purush*. They maintain that this area is the focal point of distribution of *Brahmandiya Chetna* (cosmic energy) to the entire world. Places like *Nandan Van* and Kailash with Mahashivaling, which find mention in ancient legends of *Swarg* are situated in this very part of the Himalayas.

Notwithstanding various references and hypothesis, experiences and perceptions also confirm that the focal point of the vital energy (*Chetna*) omnipresent on this earth lies in this heartland of the Himalayas. That is why this area is known as *Devatma Himalaya*. Like the north pole of the earth, this part of the Himalaya has been known as the magnetic pole of the cosmic energy of spirituality.

As mentioned earlier, here the necessary component of *Brahmandiya Chetna* (Cosmic energy) is contacted, drawn, stored and divided and distributed according to the need felt by mankind in all parts of the world. Geographically, the area encompasses the terrain just downstream of Gangotri-Gomukh (snout of *Gangotri* glacier), around Badrinath and Sumeru. The energy force required for establishing the new world order during the *Yug sandhi* is now being transmitted by *Pragyavtar* (incarnation of absolute wisdom i.e. *Gayatri*) from this region. Gradually, the intensity of this force is increasing day by day. It is like the heat of rays of the sun, which mildly warm during the sunrise, but gradually and imperceptibly become unbearably hot by mid day.

This focal point of energy is presently very active. Those possessing capability of extra-sensory perception can see here violent eruptions of a giant volcano throwing up flames of celestial energy. This specific activity of Almighty is taking place to provide an easy access to specific capabilities to the deserving person, depending on their entitlement. Here it may again be mentioned that such a celestial energy is made available only for fulfilling divine objectives and is beyond the reach of narrow-minded selfish persons.

Human consciousness operates in three levels, physical and astral. They are known as physical (*sthool*) and astral (*sookshma* and *karan*). *Sthool* governs physical activities, *sookshma* governs mind, the contemplatory process. *Karan* is the inner soul. These three components of consciousness are correlatable with *shraddha*, *pragya* and *nishtha*. The wisdom (*Vidya*) of *bhakti yog*, *gyan yog* and *karmyog* is meant to develop these three attributes. The trinity of *Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundaram* also elaborates these very aspects of life. In the evolution of human soul, the three successive status achieved corresponding to the above three stages are *Devta* (divine men), *Rishi* (saints) and *Siddha Purush* (men with para-normal capabilities). A human being comprises these three forms of existence each one overlapping the other. The focal points of *karan shareer* is *hriday chakra*. That of *sookshma shareer*, *agya chakra* and of *sthool shareer*, *nabhi chakra*. Through the medium of spinal column, *Kundalini* (source of spiritual energy in body) energises the two *chakras*, *nabhichakra* or *mooladhar* and *sahasrar*. In parlance of spirituality, *mooladhar* is known as *bhoolok*, *sahasrar* as *Brahmlok* and the central path of flowage of spiritual current in the spinal column in between the above two as "*Devyam*". Awakening (activation) of *kundalini* takes place in this field.

Activation of *hriday chakra* results in experiencing supreme bliss (*amritanubhooti*), that of *agya chakra* in perception of celestial luminescence (*divya jyoti*) and of *mooladhar nabhi chakra* in generation of *pran oorja* (vital force). Each of these three celestial powers has its own characteristics. With the perception of supreme bliss (*amritanubhooti*) the devotee is overwhelmed with imbibition of celestial attributes of divinity. There is a percep-

tion of fulfillment of all desires. There is also feeling of immense pleasure in the supreme bliss wherein the devotee attains a state in which desire of acquisition of objects of physical needs disappears, abstract desires such as name, fame and success vanish and concurrently one attains absolute peace and develops competence to infuse empathy and celestial inspirations in the surrounding environment and biological kingdoms of the world. Consequently such individuals come to be known as God men (*dharti ke devta*), messengers of God (*agradoot*), incarnations etc.

Those who possess a competent and healthy astral body (*sookchma shareer*) are known as *Rishis* (saints), *Manishis* (wise and learned) and *Tatvadarshi* (philosophers). They have specific capabilities to go to the roots of facts. They are blessed with many para-normal capacities. Intellectually, they exhibit a high level of competence for superhuman achievements. Such persons do not need the help of any worldly object for their research. No help of any equipment or instrumentation was taken by Vyas in his literary creativity, Dhanvantri in his researches on Ayurved (ancient Indian medical science based on herbal treatment), Dronacharya for his expertise in arms and armaments and Sushroot in his knowledge of surgery. These saints had made their astral body (*sookchma shareer*) as their laboratory for experiments. Dadhichi was a mobile atomic reactor cum radar and his bones could be used for creating an atomic explosion to destroy the enemy. Talent and speech of *rishis* have always been implemental in mass teaching and restoration of order in the chaos in human society. They have had the celestial gift of looking into the past, present and future and with the help of boons and banes enforced discipline and

provided support for evolution of mankind.

The physical body (*sthool body*) of the being is the abode of *pran oorja* (vital life force). Any decrease or increase of latter is reflected in corresponding changes in strength and courage of the person. The physical strength of a person, which appears to be an expression of his flesh and blood, in fact depends on the potency of this element of *pran* (vital force or life force) present in him.

Adequacy or insufficiency of this *pran shakti* within the person also controls many physical or mental attributes like resistance to diseases, life instinct, agility, radiance, magnetism of personality, competence to influence people optimism and prudence for surmounting difficulties. Though physical constitution of the person is significant in development of these characteristics, the vital life force plays an important role. In a way, the valour shown by the physically infirm persons like Gandhi and Vinoba was much more than the world famous wrestlers Sando, King Kong, Zevisco and Gama. It would be the limit of impertinence to consider the former as weak persons.

Physically brain is a constituent of human body. It is also known as the eleventh sensory organ (*Indriya*). For a physical activity related to this world, physical competence is required which is also an attribute of human body. Hence that component of consciousness (*chetna*) associated with body which is helpful in human interactions, is known as sagacity and pertains to the field of body-functions itself. This field is, however, controlled by nothing else than the power of the vital force (*pran-*

shakti). Development of various characteristics ranging from capacity of generation of stimuli for processes of procreation, artistic talents, concentration, zest for life, to engrossment in work reflect only the high potency of *pran chetna* in the person. The invisible halo surrounding the body particularly around the head (detectable only by Krilion photography) is the physical manifestation of this extra-sensory suprafine element of *pran shakti*. Biologists refer to it as *jeevani shakti* (life force). As a matter of fact it is a kind of current of vitality and like an electrical current produces miraculous results in its own field of activity. This itself is known as *nishtha* in parlance of spirituality.

Dawning of wisdom (*gyan*) or enlightenment indicates a state of maturity of subliminal consciousness much beyond the control of mind and intellect governing autonomic and voluntary functions of body. It is an advanced form of energy much more potent than that which controls mind and body in the normal course. Such an evolved state of supra-mental faculties is known as *pragya*. *Swadhyay* (studies pertaining to the innerself), *satsang* (interaction with enlightened persons), *chintan* and *manan* (contemplation and deliberations) are the medium through which *pragya* is developed. Human characteristics like farsightedness, sagacity, self-realization, self-confidence and self-reliance are only resultants of development of *pragya* in man. Generally, the faculties of conceptualisation, discernment, decision-making and sagacity in human interaction are considered components of intellect (*buddhi*) and sagacious persons are called intelligent. However, the field of spirituality follows an altogether different classification. According to latter, farsightedness or prudence exclusively means

the capacity to discriminate between vice and virtue and a tendency to imbibe only propriety. The mysterious levels of mind referred to by the psychologist as sub-conscious (*achetan*) or supra conscious (*uchch chetan*) have been collectively named *chitt* in spiritual parlance. At times *pragya* is also called *chitt* or *chitt shakti*. Various para-normal phenomena like human capacity for "natural television", telepathy, teleaudition, fore-knowledge of futurity, thought transference, *shakti pat* (extra-sensory transference of spiritual energy), awakening of serpent power, *Kundalini* in body, *shatchakra vedhan* (activation of the six nuclei of power in body accompanied with para-normal capabilities), and *panchkosh jagaran* (strengthening of the five physical and astral bodies of human being) refer only to matters related to the mystic capacities of *chitt*. *Pragya* is the governess of the potent nuclei of power in the body known as *agya chakra*, *brahmrandhra*, *sahasrar* etc. In development of *pragya*, little of physical effort and more of *sankalpa shakti* (determination of planning and stead-fastness in action) is required.

After the foregoing brief introduction of *pran* and *pragya*, one may once more reflect on his own field of faith (*astha*). One tends to create a world of his own based on concepts and convictions developed about himself, one's opinions and beliefs, one's companions and in relation to attachment with material objects. Formation of sex in the embryonic state depends exclusively on assertion of the supra conscious (*atm vishvas*). In the initial stages, the embryo has components of both the sex in equal proportion. The being (soul) chooses that sex to which his attachments in previous life (*poorva sanchit astha*) had been accustomed to and it begins to develop

accordingly. In normal life too, if a person is able to develop a firm conviction about the opposite sex it is possible to change sex. Adversity or congeniality of circumstances of life indicate only the influence of his field of faith (*astha*). Alongwith the belief in the popular adage, "man is maker of his own destiny", a person should also be aware of the mystery of man himself being the creator of his own unique world. The cocoon spun by the silk worm around itself, exoskeletons of gasteropods and lamellibranches, nests of birds and the cobweb spun by the spiders are some of the examples to show how living beings create their own worlds based on their faith (*astha*) and live within the confines either weeping and lamenting in misery, or enjoying and making others also happy. If a rare person amongst the humanity musters courage to cast off this self-woven cocoon and begins a new creation for self, there is no doubt that he would be given the credit for creating a new universe. There are numerous examples of men, women and children like Dhruva, Prahlad, Parvati, Sukanya, Ashok, Bharathari, Valmiki, Angulimal, Soor, Kabir and others, who had totally transformed their natural self in this very life and became exemplary persons.

The miraculous results obtained through the medium of deities, *mantras*, *yogas* and ascetic exercise of *dakchinmargi* and *vammargi sandhanas* are hardly because of rituals. Most of the output in such cases is the outcome of emotional involvement, *bhav shraddha*, only. Blind repetitions of rituals without assimilation of *shraddha* reduce religious practices to the state of a body without life-a contrivance of no consequence whatsoever.

Though ghosts and spirits do exist, their influence

and terror on people in general are in a way products of their own inner self. Like shadow persons (*chaya purush*) mentioned earlier, dieties too may be made to appear and demonstrate the capacity to reward the *sadhak* in proportion to his *shraddha*. The miraculous personal interactions between the stone idol of *Kali* and Ramkrishna Paramhans was nothing short of miracle. However, the same idol of Dakshineshwar temple (Calcutta) could not reward any other priest after him. Who else got the joy of Krishna's accompaniment for dances and song than Meera the saintly princess. Dronacharya in person was not as efficacious Guru for Kauravas and Pandavas as his earth idol became for Eklavya. *Shraddha* has the power to create the hallucination of a ghost in the bush. It has much higher level of capabilities than even *nishtha* and *pragya*.

The nucleus of spiritual power in the inner self is the *hriday chakra* situated around the navel. This is from where empathy emanates. Compassion or heartlessness in a human being reflect only good or bad state of the environment around this very *chakra*. In this region is imbibed an image of self which forms the basis for one's character and personality (*vyaktitva*). In other words this *chakra* govern the character and personality of a person.

Faiths or convictions (*asthas*) give rise to aspirations. Aspirations provide motivations (*prerna*) for deliberations which in turn induce action constituting the routine of life. This integrated system of faith - aspiration - motivation - deliberation - action is seen as the personality and character of a person which attract like type of people for assistance and create commensurate environment for that person. Comprehensive deliberation on the subject would confirm that the character and personality

of a person are structured totally in the institution of *astha*. Whether he is compelled to live in an environment of heavenly bliss or misery of hell depends on his own *astha*. In a garden, a butterfly chooses to sit on a flower whereas a fly goes to filth and garbage. Likewise, each person reaps the fruits of one's own choice and character. Greatness or lowliness do not descend from the heavens. It is the grove voluntarily planted and grown in the realm of one's own *astha*. The choice of growth of *vishvrikcha* (a tree with poison-fruits) or *Kalpa Vrikcha* (a mythical tree granting all wishes) depends on the inner-self of the person. The power of *bhavna* (sentience) is a million times more than that of the faculty of deliberation (*vichar shakti*). Similarly *nishtha*, *pragya* and *shraddha* are successively higher levels of development of supra-mental faculties of the being and each is finer and more competent than the preceding one.

Body is abode of *pran*, brain that of *pragya* and heart of *shraddha*. Nevertheless, these attributes are not physically related to these organs. They materialise from the invisible extra-sensory world. They are like public representatives, who are elected from various constituencies, whereas in the parliament-chamber only their seats are allotted. The celestial gifts of *chetna* are bestowed on the three body forms of human existence. The rooms and seats to be given to them are referred to as *muladhar* (*nabhi chakra*), the third eye (*agya chakra*) and *hriday chakra*. The activities of *sookchma shareer* (astral body) *sthool shareer* (physical body) and *karan shareer* (body controlling the field of sentience) are governed by these three nuclei of celestial powers.

The object of all *sadhanas* is to activate, develop

and purify the above three nuclei and bodies. Irrespective of difference in their form and methodology, the various types of *sadhanas* are meant for activation and development of one or the other of these nuclei of power. The celestial attributes of character emanate from these centres only, against which anything can be achieved in this world.

It has already been explained that for energizing the nuclei of the celestial attributes, each *sadhak* has to make his own endeavour. The full objective of *sadhana* is achieved through the four-fold activities of self-purification, self-refinement, practice of *yog* and ascetic exercise of devout austerity (*tap*). These are the foundation stones for erecting the structure of all-round progress in self-evolution and wordly achievements.

Today, however, emphasis is being laid on the significance of *yug sandhi*. During this juncture of two centuries enlightened souls may benefit from acquisition of these attributes as special donations from the creator. It must once again be remembered, that these divine gifts are being made available exclusively for welfare of mankind. Unless availed of they would be forced to go elsewhere to some other person like visitors to a hotel, who do not get accommodation, in a particular establishment, seek it elsewhere.

HOW TO EARN MERIT IN PREVAILING ENVIRONMENT

For the duration of two decades of the *yug sandhi* (Juncture of the two centuries) between 1991 and 2000 A.D. a special transmission of celestial energy is being made from an epicentre of spirituality situated in the Himalayas. Anyone prepared to rise a little above his baseness can conveniently receive this specially transmitted power of God for utilization in self-advancement as well as for welfare of humanity. For this purpose a beginning is to be made for developing a certain degree of maturity in one's way of thinking. Let there be no delusion that this grace of God will be easily obtainable by taking ritualistic pledges, giving true or false assurances or by indulging in deliberate deception.

During the present *yug sandhi* the cosmic energy of the creator -*mahakaal* (the supreme disciplinarian) is engaged in eliminating the chaos and disorder and augmenting virtuous traits amongst the humanity. A glaring example of HIS recent endeavours of creation can be seen in the activities being carried out under *pragya abhiyan* (crusade for promotion of *pragya* or righteous wisdom). Those desirous of participating in revolutions of this magnitude, are necessarily required to donate time and resources (*anshdan*). There is no escape from the above prerequisites. The merit (*patrata*) for this grace of God could only be earned by those, who would give same importance to the cause and make the same endeavour for shouldering the responsibilities of reestablishment of a new world order (*navshrajun*) as they are giving to looking after their personal needs and to the requirements of the family. Rituals of religious practices are merely superficial means of obtaining divine grace.

With latter, there is no possibility of creation of an appropriate environment for success unless one is prepared to earn and prove merit. Endeavours made for self-purification and self-refinement are the only proofs of unwavering faith in spirituality of a person.

The process of benefitting from acquisition of three-fold celestial transmissions being beamed these days on the auspicious occasion of the *yug sandhi* is very simple. How should one plead to God and what will be the returns, are aspects irrelevant to the issue. The basic question here is that of merit or worthiness (*patrata*) of the receiver. Is the giver capable of giving? Has the receiver unquestionable credibility, integrity, merit (*patrata*) and capacity to utilize the divine gift appropriately? These are the two basic questions relevant for any transaction in this world. The same holds true in the world of spirituality. Where the objective of *sadhana* is acquisition of para-normal powers, even a casual adherence to rituals of worship serves the purpose. The fundamental requirement is development of *patrata*. A pragmatic *sadhak* concentrates his energies on contemplations and efforts directed towards the process of self-appraisal and self-purification. It is obviously a difficult task. Disregarding this fundamental aspect, the multitude dreams about miraculous achievements with the help of rituals, whereas a pragmatic approach should involve one's own concrete efforts for progress and success. It is being emphasized again and again that for being worthy of divine grace and establishing a sound foundation for success in the field of spirituality the *sadhak* has no alternative to development of his *patrata* (merit) with the help of efforts for self-purification and self-refinement.

It requires a three-fold action plan requiring (1) *upasana* (2) *sadhana* and (3) *aradhna*. *Upasana* i.e. sitting near and establishing an ever closer intimate relationship with the omnipresent God who is an ensemble of all high ideals. He may be regarded as the motivator for imbibition of more and more virtues in life. When one makes an effort to develop a feeling of closeness (*bhakti-bhavana*) to God he tends to become progressively more virtuous i.e. saintly. With progressive incorporation of ideals and development of virtues in life the credibility of person in society increases since on account of exclusive choice of propriety, he begins to inspire instantaneous confidence. Charging the inner-self with a high intensity of *shraddha* brings the *sadhak* nearer to God and gradually he becomes one with God, just as fuel becomes fire on coming closer to latter.

By *sadhana* here we mean *sadhana* of life. It requires four-fold action-namely, self-appraisal, self-purification, self-reformation and self-development. For each of these we are required to make a regular arrangement of *swadhyay* (study of literature pertaining to inner-self i.e. literature on spirituality), *satsang* (interaction with those evolved in spirituality), *chintan* (deliberations on self-reformation and self-advancement) and *manan* (self-appraisal and eradication of undesirable traits), successively. Structuring of time for each day of life is to be carried out on the format of the four self-disciplines of *indriya sanyam* (a conscious effort to exercise self-restraint and discipline the sense organs which should choose only propriety), *arth sanyam* (best utilization of every bit of available resources i.e. appropriate handling of resources for useful purposes); *samay sanyam* (a consistent utilization of every moment of time in fulfill-

ment of some useful purpose); keeping oneself ever-busy, there should be scrupulous avoidance of lethargy and waste of time in unproductive ventures and *vichar sanyam* (imbibition of high thinking, engagement of mind in creative activities, vigilantly safeguarding the mind against immoral, egoistic and destructive thoughts). After a careful appraisal of the life spent so far one should plan to imbibe a greater degree of excellence for the future and act accordingly. An endeavour should be made to augment cultural excellence in self and make it a habit to incorporate civility becoming of gentlemen in personal interactions. In short the foregoing is the basis of *jeevan sadhna* (spiritual disciplining of life).

After having established a firm conviction in these values a pledge (*sankalpa*) is taken to make them an inseparable part of nature and habit. This is how the raw human being who is naturally no better than an animal in behaviour, is transmuted into a civilized person. With this endeavour a being avails of the opportunity to become a super-being and ultimately finds communion with the supreme being (god) possible.

Aradhna means dedication of a major part of one's time (*samaydan*) and resources (*anshdan*) for welfare of mankind. As a consequence of this humble benevolent endeavour one is benefitted in three ways. One-in reciprocation of the advantages taken from the society, he pays back the debt due to the former. Two- the expectations of the Creator are fulfilled. And, three- the path to an all-round progress in life becomes enlightened. The most utilitarian act of benevolence (*paramartha sadhana*) in modern times would be to bring in a revolution in the ways of thinking of mankind as a whole. *Vichar Kranti* is a revolution of concepts. Augmentation of virtuous traits

(*satpravriti samvardhan*) is the only way to reverse currents of degradation. Those interested in performing higher levels of *aradhna* are advised to associate themselves in the crusade (*pragya pravah*) under operation for resurrection of human faith in ideals, reformation of mass psychology and augmentation of virtuous traits.

These days an all-pervasive multi-dimensional approach is being made for restructuring of environment for man, family and society with the help of a special energy field-*yugantariya chetna*, created by the Almighty for this juncture of the centuries. This energy would help the *sadhaks* in imbibing new ideals with greater ease and augment the existing ones. In this context, one is specially recommended to go through october, 1989 issue of *Akhand Jyoti*. (a publication of this mission). Those who are alive to the need of the day and are endeavouring to develop merit (*patrata*) to obtain divine grace can easily benefit from this energy being beamed from the Himalayas, like the brilliant golden rays of the rising sun. The spiritual accomplishments which are otherwise acquired after prolonged ascetic exercises can these days be made possible very easily by establishing a link with this transmission.

The transmission begins an hour before sunrise and continues till sunrise. In the evening it continues from sun-set till an hour thereafter. These are the two intervals of time recommended for *sadhana*. While seating for *sadhana*, face should be towards the Himalayas. In India, at most of the places it will be northwards, but in other countries directions will vary. Hence, the direction in which Himalaya is situated may be found out before taking one's seat for *sadhana*.

Although solitary *sadhana* is also possible, *sadhana* in group has been found to be more efficaceous. When persons with identical objective and similar bent of mind gather at one place, each one benefits from combined strength. Advantages accruing from group *sadhanas* benefit the mankind all over the world, besides helping those participating in them. Consequently, one also gets the additional satisfaction of performing a pious deed, apart from strengthening of ones own physical and astral bodies for self-advancements.

Though this transmission is available everyday for personal *sadhana*, it is recommended that once in a week on Sundays and thursdays group *sadhanas* may be performed. The schedule may be chosen according to the convenience of participants and may be changed later according to the need. For these sessions it is not necessary to take a bath beforehand. Nevertheless hands, legs and face may be washed and as far as practicable clean clothes may be worn. Least number of clothes should be worn during *sadhana*.

Here it should be remembered that these sessions of meditations are not for practice only. They are specifically meant for receiving the special grace (anudan) of God available these days. While seating the *sadhaks* should conceptualize imbibition of solar energy within themselves and this state of mind should be maintained throughout the period of *sadhana*. Half an hour for *sadhana* is recommended for practice. A watch may be used to keep time. The three types of transmissions may be conceptualized in rotation for each of the three body forms of self, viz physical body (*sthool sharir*) and astral bodies (*sookhm* and *karan sharir*).